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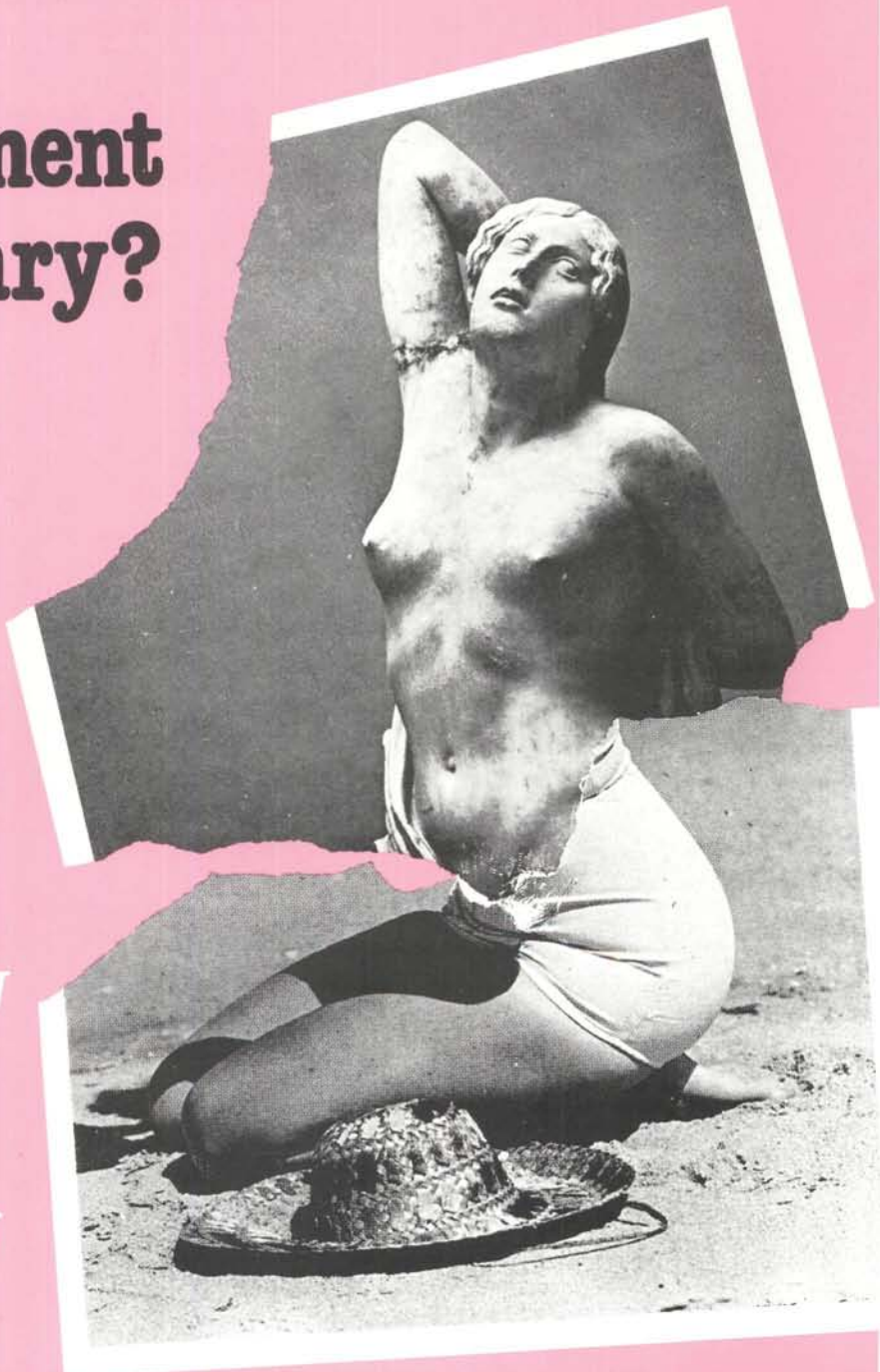

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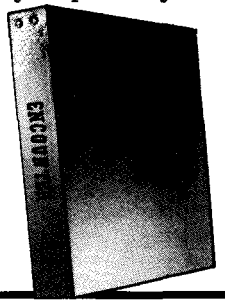

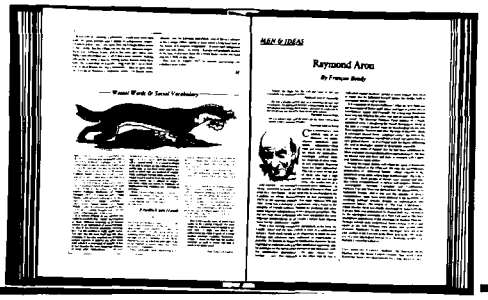

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JANUARY 1985 VOL. LXIV No. 1 ISSN 0013-7073

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© 1984–85 by Encounter Ltd. Ten issues a year (July-August and September-October are single issues). Per copy: UK £1.50 USA & Canada $3.50. Back numbers £2.25 ($5.00) Postage/packaging: 50p ($1.00). Annual subscriptions: UK £18.00: USA & Canada $39.00 air-speeded: India £20.00 by air. Elsewhere £19.00. Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 59 St Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4JS (01-836 4194): UK Trade Distributors: Cutlerglen, 10a Dryden Street, London WC2 (01-836 0042). Postmaster: Send address corrections to Encounter, c/o US Mailing Agent: Expediters of the Printed Word Ltd., 515 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022 (212-744 2832). Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or International Reply Coupons.

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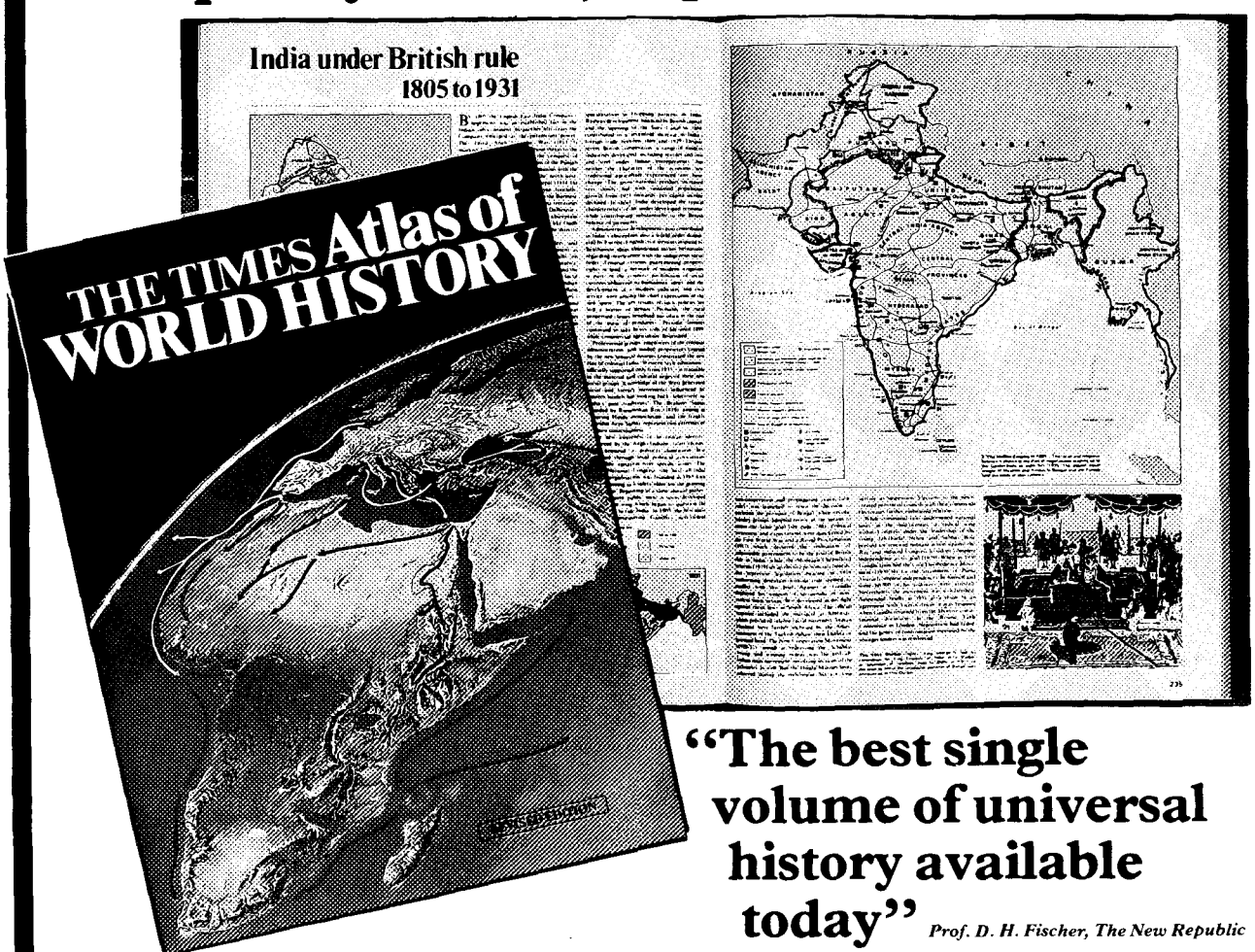

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Tracey Lloyd

McIver in Bombay

IN FOREIGN CITIES for the first time we look at once for those particular sights which are supposed to typify the place, as though to prove that we are really there.

Although manifestly not a tourist (he held his brief-case on his knees and felt in the darkness the steel of its reinforced corners), McIver was no exception to this rule. Gazing about him as they pulled away from the airport he was immediately confronted with, on the one hand, a beggar, and on the other a sacred cow. Reassured, he opened the brief-case, switched on a small torch and turned his attention to his notes.

The taxi nosed its way through the warm darkness like a dog in a dirty gutter. In the gaudy light of rubbish fires, faces were daubed for a moment on the night; black sagging tents of the shanties wavered beyond the flames. McIver read on. There was one small incident, when the taxi pulled up by a petrol pump and the driver held out his hand for money. McIver explained that he was being conveyed, as the driver himself well knew, by courtesy of the airline, whose incompetence in the matter of schedules was the sole reason for his presence in Bombay. The driver replied in his own language, passionately and with menace. He swore, sobbed and threatened; he hammered on the steering-wheel with a slender fist. Then he let in the clutch and drove briskly away.

The drive was a long one, through dim, peripheral streets. McIver read in silence, the driver muttered, the vehicle bucked and swerved and rancid breezes wafted from the alleys. A hump-backed bridge took the gears by surprise and at once the broad imperial silhouette of the city centre shaped itself around them—post office, bank, museum and hotel. The matter of the fare was taken over by a plump, urbane night-porter, the driver gesticulated beyond plate glass, and McIver followed his luggage through the hushed lobby to the lift. It was very late.

THE SUN ROSE long before he did, shining down on the sea and the unwashed sands. It shone on the still-smoking rubbish fires where big birds shuffled and stabbed, and on the white robes which the *sadhu* lifted clear of his loins as he squatted at stool in the shallows.

McIver came down to find the lobby full of the expensive luggage of departing guests. A small fountain, silent the night before, now popped discreetly, and a queue had formed at the *bureau de change*. By the time he went into breakfast the croissants were finished and the previous occupant of his table had left a crumpled napkin in a pool of jam. A waiter wearing striped pantaloons moved without hurry to bring him fruit juice and soft triangles of toast. He opened his brief-case.

"Mr McIver?" A young man in a shantung suit stood by the table. "Please, sir, you are welcome in Bombay. I am assistant co-ordinator, Maharashtra district office. I am R. K. Sengupta. Most usually, sir, known to my friends as Dick. I think you are finding everything at this hotel to your liking, isn't it?"

He declined coffee but spoke in an undertone to the waiter who almost at once brought him some pale curdled matter in a steel dish. He sipped at it with a small teaspoon while he apologised for the enforced stopover, deplored his country's backwardness, marvelled that such an important member of head office should only now be paying his first visit to the sub-continent, and explained that the connecting flight would not be leaving until seven the next morning. At the look on McIver's face he flinched.

"It is unavoidable, sir. A problem of maintenance. I have been at them hammer and tongs."

"But that means I have to kill time in Bombay for twenty-four hours."

"We have allowed for it, sir. Plans have been made." The flesh inside his radiantly smiling mouth was red as pomegranates. "This afternoon you have a conducted tour of the city. Please! It is already paid for."

"Cancel it", said McIver, and rose from the table.

"It is entirely as you please." R. K. Sengupta's voice was like warm oil. "I myself shall be here at five-thirty tomorrow morning to take you to the airport. For today, I will leave you in peace. The accommodation is tip-top."

It was impossible to work. The icy stridor of the air-conditioning made his room like a noisy morgue. He switched it off and within minutes a silent and

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suffocating heat spread to every corner. He searched without success for a way to open the plate-glass window, and sweat formed on his upper lip. There was nothing to do but to sleep.

Beyond the glass, the midday sun jumped off the sea and flung bright splinters on the causeway below. Sun shone in the eyes of the squatting cripples, the boys shelling peanuts, the children in new white socks.

Wide awake on his immaculate bed, McIver leapt as the phone rang. The voice was deferential but firm.

"Sir, I am Theo Fernandez. Please find me at reception."

Slatted blinds in the lobby diffused the afternoon light. A blonde with a rucksack chose postcards and elderly Americans slept by the fountain. As McIver stepped from the lift, a short and shabby man came to meet him.

"Good afternoon, sir, the car is waiting. We shall go." He gestured towards the plate-glass doors. McIver stared. "Your city tour. Bombay half day, without refreshments. Bought and paid for."

McIver stopped. "I'm sorry. I told Mr Sengupta. I'm not interested."

"Sir, the taxi is waiting."

"Cancel it."

"Sir, the tour is very restful. There is no need to leave the car. Bombay has a wealth of interest for the tourist. See—this is the itinerary."

He stood quiet, his eyes trustful, like a dog who knows that its master must relent and take him to the park. He wore a jacket with leather patches and unpressed gabardine trousers. His feet were short and his toe-caps innocently round. There was a rooted quality about him as though, in the forgotten years since his youth, he had thickened like a tree. His neck was broad above the heather-mixture tie, and the original elasticity of his dun-coloured cheeks had stretched and perished into innumerable tiny holes.

McIver looked at his watch. "How long will it take?"

"No time. No time at all. Short, long, as you please. Sir, come, we will discuss."

The taxi had lace curtains and a bunch of plastic grapes. McIver sat in the back, next to a young woman in a pink sari.

"Miss Bannerjee", said Mr Fernandez, as they pulled away from the swept and spotless forecourt and out into the day. She smiled at him with closed lips.

"Bombay", said Mr Fernandez, twisting his head over the thick fold of his neck to address them in the rear seat, "is built on seven islands. There are many bridges in this fine and beautiful city. The inhabitants of Bombay are extremely fond of the seaside. There are many fine beaches as, for example, Chowpatty Beach, favourite haunt of Sunday crowds."

The breeze brought a smell of urine evaporating on hot pavements. A woman pegged washing on a sixth-floor balcony and an old man carried water in a margarine tin. Chowpatty Beach was deserted. "It is the heat", said Mr Fernandez.

AT THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS, where the taxi stalled, McIver studied a film poster. The hero had plump cheeks and lips more red than those of R. K. Sengupta. The heroine smiled like Miss Bannerjee, her mouth firmly closed. The starter fired its useless salvos and a bullock swayed past, its bony hips on a level with the window. Fernandez encouraged the driver, the bullock swung up its tail and the tight ring of its rectum stretched open to eject a succession of richly-smelling turds, which fell in a soft heap on the road.

Miss Bannerjee was smiling still, her eyes fixed on Mr Fernandez' neck.

"The eminence you may see ahead", he began again, as the taxi pulled away, "is the famous Malabar Hills, to which we shall be ascending shortly. But first we visit a Jainist temple."

It was in a side street, next to a row of shops. They left the taxi and passed through an airless courtyard under knotted trees where an old woman in white muslin took charge of their shoes. "One rupee is sufficient", said Mr Fernandez.

McIver climbed a white marble staircase, feeling its coolness through his socks. On a landing with a painted frieze, sticks of incense burned and dropped in front of golden images. Sweet smoke mingled with a smell of feet. Pigeons were groaning gently, somewhere out of sight.

"Jainists", said Mr Fernandez, short of breath from the stairs, "have such devout respect for all human life that some will always wear a mask over nose and mouth lest they inadvertently inhale, and thus destroy, certain small flying creatures. They are extremely rich." Miss Bannerjee listened with rapt attention. McIver stepped forward to the balustrade and saw below in a dark inner courtyard an old man asleep on a string bed. The pigeons jostled for space on greasy ledges.

He made for the stairs. He plucked his shoes, large and clumsy, from the litter of sandals and fragile slippers. Fernandez and Miss Bannerjee stood tranquil while he laced them up, and the old woman folded her soft hands. He turned, and strode back to the taxi.

At his approach, the driver slid down from the bonnet, banging dust from his skinny buttocks and disturbing a flock of touts and beggars which had settled about the car. Wheeling and swooping at McIver, they thrust bangles, carvings, postcards in his face. Two of them unfolded a lace table-cloth and barred his way. A child with matted hair plucked at his arm and, as he moved to free himself, dropped down to lie across his feet and grip his trouser leg. His heart banged at the back of his throat.

"You wish to buy?" It was Miss Bannerjee.

"No, no. . . ." He swallowed. "Not just at the moment."

She spoke quickly, her eyes narrow, her nostrils pinched, her voice shrill with contempt, and they dropped away from him like leeches dabbed with salt.

McIver sank back in the taxi. His trouser leg was crumpled and there was sweat in his hair. Miss

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Bannerjee leaned forward, the little square of flesh above the neckline of her shiny blouse heaving with indignation. "These people! They are a blot upon our country. So very, very greedy and not refined at all."

McIver studied the trite perfection of her face, the eyebrow arched like a drawn bow, the delicate wash of colour on her cheek, and thought how quickly she would age.

"THE GARDENS WE SHALL SEE", said Mr Fernandez, as the taxi pulled away and Miss Bannerjee subsided into the corner seat, "were laid out by a certain wealthy Parsee." Why did she wear that ugly sari? It was pink nylon, shiny like cheap underwear, and puckered at intervals with mean little clusters of embroidered flowers. "A special feature is the hedges which are cut into animal shapes."

McIver stared absently at her well-covered right knee and remembered the woman at the airport. He had been sitting in the transit lounge, his off-loaded luggage piled at his feet, waiting for an explanation. She was squatting outside a door marked Ladies, with a rag and a bucket, her body wrapped in cheap green cloth. At the time he scarcely noticed her but now it came to him quite clearly how, as she rose to open the door, he had seen through the thin material the outline of her small female shape. Deep in the cold neglected embers of McIver's sensuality a little breeze blew up.

"These gardens are planted over the main reservoir for the city of Bombay. You will note the magnificent floral clock." His thoughts began trickling back to the airport but Miss Bannerjee's glance was on him and he had to lift his head. The sensation was so unexpected that he scarcely recognised it. She was staring straight at him and there was a question in her eyes. He was drawn into her, swallowed up by that dark, searching gaze. Her lips parted, he caught a glimpse of her moistly gleaming teeth and then the veil of her lashes dropped modestly down. The breeze quickened and small flames licked at the pit of his stomach.

"Pherozeshah Mehta Gardens", said Mr Fernandez. "Here we leave the car to stroll for a while."

Sun beat on the sandy paths and Miss Bannerjee moved pink and fragrant in the corner of his eye.

"The Parsees do not bury their dead. They bring them to this place beyond the trees. It is called the Towers of Silence. Here the bodies are exposed on platforms and vultures come to eat the flesh."

A man in a pastel-blue turban knelt on the grass to play ball with his son. Her feet on the path were slender and softly brown, the delicate bones set off by the leather strap which threaded itself between her toes.

"The problem was this. As the vultures flew over the reservoir the flesh from the corpses would fall from their beaks, thus spoiling the water for drinking."

Two little girls in silk trousers ran past, black pigtails thumping on their backs. Miss Bannerjee's hair hung loose and heavy to her shoulders and it shone like black pearl.

"The solution was to build gardens over the reservoir. You will note the magnificent views of harbour and city. And now Miss Bannerjee will take you to the children's playground, while I must find our driver."

She led him between parked cars, under flat-topped trees. "This park was given to Bombay by the wife of our Prime Minister."

"I thought your Prime Minister was a woman."

"This was before. Many years."

The sky was a transparent skin of blue, stretched above the seven islands of Bombay, and sweat trickled inside McIver's shirt.

"Are you related to Mr Fernandez?"

"Not at all, no." She laughed. "I am a trainee. In the study of tourism. Ah, there he is."

Portly by the ornamental gates, Fernandez lifted himself on his toes. "It is a crying shame", said Miss Bannerjee, "this traffic in our city."

PLASTIC GRAPES BOBBING, lace curtains tightly drawn, the taxi brought them down from the Malabar Hills in the late afternoon, past the front entrance of the Parsee Cemetery ("No one can tell how it is inside. Relatives deposit the body at the gates and then everything is up to the attendants.") and on through the gaudy, dreary, crowded, endless, dusty streets of Bombay.

They pulled up outside a tall house in a side road.

"Mani Bhavan." Mr Fernandez had lips the colour of bruised plums. "The museum of Gandhi. A highlight. Regrettably we are late and may no longer be granted admission."

"Please", said McIver urgently. "Please will you go and find out?"

Fernandez waddled away and he turned to the woman. As he opened his mouth to speak, she leaned forward.

"I wish to discuss a certain matter. I cannot speak before others. I will come to your hotel at eight o'clock." Pink, soft and impassive, she melted back into her seat as Fernandez gestured eagerly from the house.

"THERE IS AN INDEFINABLE mysterious power that pervades everything. I feel it though I do not see it." Commemorative stamps and translations on cheap paper lay behind glass in the vestibule of the Gandhi Museum. An attendant hovered over a Japanese cassette-player and the words fell through the air like motes of dust. "I do dimly perceive that while everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates."

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They went upstairs to the diorama and McIver followed from glass case to glass case the tiny figure of the Mahatma as he suffered indignities, fomented rebellion, rejoiced with the multitude, fell to the assassin's hand and burned at last on the funeral pyre. He stared at the sleeping room, the spinning-wheel, the rice bowl, the string bed. "The *charka* of Gandhiji", Miss Bannerjee murmured in his ear. He wandered slowly round the memorial library and Mr Fernandez looked at his watch.

By the time they drove away the sun had withdrawn behind the apartment blocks and families were strolling with linked arms on Marine Drive. "Unquestionably", said Mr Fernandez, "the Aquarium is closed."

At the hotel he accepted his tip with a clumsy speech of thanks and hurried to dismiss the driver. Miss Bannerjee had already smiled demurely and slipped away.

McIver took a shower. His skin came alive in the hot, insistent rain, as it fell on his face and into his mouth. He sluiced it through his hair, let it run off his back and his shoulders, across his belly and down between his thighs. And then he wrapped himself in a towel and walked barefoot in the curtained room.

DUSK DEEPENED on the city as Mr Fernandez waited for his bus; the ash on a hundred thousand joss-sticks lengthened and fell. On Colobar Causeway the limbless beggars propelled themselves on wheeled trolleys between the legs of tourists, who bargained by the light of hurricane lamps for brass bangles and peacock-feather fans. Beyond them in the darkness black water lapped against the tethered boats.

McIver was in the lobby early. The fountain pattered and the rich came and went. Up in his room two small shaded lamps were burning, one on each side of the bed. But first he would take her for a meal. He tried to remember her perfume, the lift of her breasts, the hair which hung down her back. And then she came through the plate-glass doors. She looked uncertain and she carried a plastic carrier-bag.

He took her to the bar. She sat in a basket chair, the carrier-bag in her lap, and held a glass of pineapple juice by the stem. She told him how long she had waited for her bus and he could see that she was still agitated; her breath came quickly and a few strands of hair had caught and tangled on her cheek.

He was touched. "I would have waited." She lowered her lashes and they were both silent. And then she lifted her head, looked into his eyes and asked.

"Mr McIver, I think you are married, isn't it?"

"Yes." He was caught off guard.

But she was smiling and opening the carrier-bag. From folds of newspaper, she unwrapped a pink nylon sari, tightly embroidered with little flowers.

"No doubt you will like to take home a present for your wife. You see, it is the same exactly. I saw how you admired it in the taxi." She dropped her head to her shoulder, like a roguish bird, and the strands of hair pulled free of her cheek. "We women notice such things. And if it is not good colour for her, I have many more." She patted the carrier-bag. "A wide range, all hand-embroidered. You will not find such quality in the shops, even in duty-free. And very, very reasonable."

Voices from the bar burst and broke in his ears. She leaned forward and repeated the price and he did not haggle. He watched as she folded the notes very small and snapped them into her purse. He sat there, long after she had gone, and insects drowned, one by one, in his beer. When he finally got up to go he left the sari, in its wrapping of cheap newsprint, lying on the table.

IN THE EARLY MORNING DARKNESS the waves broke unseen on Chowpatty Beach and rats nosed in the embers of the rubbish fires. The blinds were still drawn in the hotel bar where, by weak electric light, a barefoot cleaner in white shorts wiped the glass ashtrays with a strip of cloth. McIver drove to the airport. R. K. Sengupta sat in front with the driver, and all three were silent.

Fingers of early sunlight began to probe the alleyways, and out on the gilded sea the unsinkable turds bobbed up against each other like fishing-smacks.

A Family Portrait *circa* 1900

Going blackly back to the old unknown
looking like this! Father, frowning
the future out of countenance;

his beautiful wife wearing a greedy smile
that is smugly defiant, as if she had been caught
secretly nursing proprietary guilt.

Can she suppose nobody knows?
Her eyes are ablaze with praise to the Lord
the Almighty; but she looks bored.

She rests a white hand on the cold shoulder
of the unconsoled girl sitting in front.
Her daughter. Hers for life.

Michael Hulse

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E. J. Mishan

Was the Women's Liberation Movement Really Necessary?

"Homo sapiens . . . in acquiring new lofty motives . . . has lost none of his old earthy ones . . . his old impulses have been with him for millions of years . . . and there is no hope of quickly shrugging off the accumulated legacy of his whole evolutionary past."

DESMOND MORRIS, *The Naked Ape (1967)*

IN VIEW OF the unending debate within the ranks of the Women's Movement about the personality and life-style to which the liberated female should aspire, I suggest that in any new edition the above passage should be repeated exactly save that the word "*woman*" be substituted for *homo sapiens* and (of course) the word "*her*" for "*his*" or "*him*." Recognition of the general proposition would, in any case, act as a salutary check to the belief cherished both by liberal reformers and by revolutionary idealists in the boundless adaptability of ordinary men and women.

According to the zoological thesis there is a vast complex of instincts in mankind beyond conscious control, an ineradicable part of man's biological heritage acquired in the struggle for survival some several million years ago, long before his mastery of the earth began—before, that is, the beginnings of recorded history some 6,000 years ago.

Few thinking people today would seriously contend that the highly artificial life to which modern man is consigned by the routines of a high-technology civilisation is well-suited either to his physical needs or, in large measure, to his psychic needs. It would indeed be surprising if the constraints and the pressures of modern life—the outcome of men's ceaseless endeavours to adjust themselves to the inexorable advance of science and technology—were not at odds with many of his deeper urges.

If I seem to be labouring the obvious, it is simply in order to gain distance in the attempt to appraise the character and the ideals of the Women's Movement. In particular, the tensions and traumas arising from the ceaseless efforts of men and institutions to adapt themselves so as to cope with an unprecedented transformation of the technostructure of society (which has been gathering pace since the turn of the century) can hardly be exaggerated. The sheer weight of accumulating artifice bears sorely upon all of us, on both men and women and on young and old alike. Despite its many material advantages, the growth of this mass affluent civilisation has generated, along with a pervasive restlessness, an eruption of stress diseases unknown to traditional societies.

1. *Feminism in Hard & Disoriented Times*

SUCH CONSIDERATIONS should be at the front of our minds in any endeavour to move beyond the familiar rhetorical exchanges and demarcation lines that characterise the debate—so as to assess more soberly the causes of dissatisfaction voiced by the Women's Movement in their declared struggle to emancipate themselves from their conception of a woman's traditional role, one that is still regarded by many as ignoble and demeaning. The focal term, emancipation, however, suggests a pertinent question: is there indeed a *natural* role for women?

In all the rest of living nature the role of the female is manifestly distinct from that of the male, a fact readily confirmed by observing the behaviour of any species of the mammal class in its natural environment. Although there are many forms of behaviour that are common to both sexes in any species, role differentiation is an essential part of its survival mechanism. It would be straining credulity, therefore, to imagine that humans were somehow exempted from the natural order or that in a fit of absent-mindedness Mother Nature, after diligently attending to the physical differentiation of the sexes, forgot about the instinctual differentiation necessary to activate sexual roles. According to received zoological opinion, at any rate, the primitive female human

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when encumbered by children depended heavily upon the loyalty of the human male for food and protection. Indeed, the evolution of a "fidelity instinct" can be explained in terms of Darwinian natural selection. The cooperation between all males in the hunting parties was necessary for success. This continuing cooperation, however, required that sexual rivalries be minimal, a condition which could be realised only if the expectation prevailed that the individual female would remain faithful to her "bonded" male during his absence. What is more, evolution of a one-male one-female breeding unit was important for the heavy task of rearing and training that the slowly-developing young demanded.[1]

Certainly, it must be conceded then that a distinctive female role is an unalterable part of a woman's genetic inheritance—which is to say that these innate feminine characteristics are still with her. Stronger in some cases than in others, incipient stirrings and impulses continue to assert themselves at different times in her life, however expressed or repressed or diverted.

The full extent and intensity of human role-differentiation cannot, alas, be observed any longer in a natural environment: for insights we have to depend upon the inferences of psychologists, anthropologists, zoologists, and others. Yet the inescapable fact of its existence does invite a question that is supplementary to the earlier one: do any of the political images of the new woman comport well with the natural or instinctual female role, so affording it scope and expression? Put otherwise, what confidence can be reposed in the unquestioned belief that the efforts of millions of women to conform to these fashionable political images—to adjust their outlook, behaviour, and personality to the requirements of the more popular stereotypes—are not inherently antagonistic to the genetically-determined feminine role or, as some might say, "the essential womanhood" of women?

These questions may properly be regarded as rhetorical. They may also be thought largely academic. For it is hard to resist the argument that women today in fact have limited choice, and that the new political forces seeking to restructure her character are only a reflection of more powerful economic forces themselves directed by an irresistible technological momentum.

Repression or Depression?

IT IS SURELY MORE than possible, therefore, that some part of the sense of frustration experienced today by committed feminists and indeed by many women arises from an historically novel situation in which the persona of the new liberated woman is persistently and acutely opposed by instinctual patterns indelibly imprinted on her psychic plasm.

As a psychologist might express it, this recurring sense of exasperation about which the conscientious feminist complains—as her ardent pursuit of prestige vocations and material status, in the abrasive metropolitan societies of the West, wrenches against rooted female instincts—is rationalised in ideological terms as her spirited reaction to an incorrigibly repressive male-dominated world. In this way, the inevitable conflicts between the worldly aspirations of feminists on the one hand and, on the other, the irrepressible pulsings of the female psyche, are projected on to a political screen where they are acted out as a continuing conflict of interest and privilege between reluctant males and determined females.

With this interpretation in mind, it is as well to emphasise that the strains, the vexations, and the despair associated with modern life are experienced by *both* sexes. In the same connection it is important to remark that some of the *conditions* necessary to sustain the modern economy—such as prolonged vocational training, high mobility, rapid obsolescence, and institutionalised discontent—along with some of the *consequences* of its continuing operation (in particular, an inhuman urban environment and an erosion of standards of taste and decorum) combine to exert disintegrative pressures on the community and on the family. Such disintegrative pressures, however, gain strength from modern ideas of casual sex unions, and of emancipated marriage and child-rearing. A symptom of this is the phenomenal spate of new books and magazine articles on family problems, on adolescent afflictions, on coping with marriage, on the gymnastics of sex, on the good "gay" life, on the joys of single parenthood, on managing one's divorce, on post-abortion therapy, and other such tracts of potted and gratuitous expertise, soul-food for a restive and disoriented population.

2. *The Emancipated Woman: Victor or Victim?*

IN THIS SPIRIT OF reflective scepticism let me examine some of the characteristics of the Women's Liberation Movement as a whole, in particular its interpretation of the past, its myths and rhetoric, its visionary aspirations, its internecine conflicts, and its emergent revisionism.

Much as I should want to qualify any simple materialist or Marxist interpretation of history, it is hard to resist the conclusion that in so far as their economic emancipation is at issue, women have had little choice. Heroic visions of "the sisters of the Revolution" storming the bastions of male privilege can be counted on to do wonders for the morale of the militants. In the real world, however, their effective activity is translated into political demands for equal opportunity (if not also for equal representation) in industry and commerce, in government and academia. Such demands are supplemented by familiar propaganda highlighting women's outstanding contributions in industry, science, and the arts, and deploring their tardy recognition by the public. Although these political activities acquire a character and momentum of their own, they also reflect the logic of emerging economic forces.

At the turn of the century there were about four million women working in Britain, of which one-and-a-half million were in domestic service. A large proportion of these women, however, were young and did not anticipate remaining long in employment. Far from wanting to compete with men on equal terms, they were keeping busy while waiting to "get married and settle down." There was little change before World War I, many occupations being closed to women in consequence of a

[1] For an outline of this thesis, see Desmond Morris, *The Naked Ape*, p. 38 *et seq.*

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belief that women were unsuited to the tasks involved, that they did not possess the necessary muscular strength or the stamina. The question of how far such a belief could be justified need not detain us here. For such has been the pace of innovation that today nearly all heavy physical work has been taken over by machinery that is activated and controlled by dials, buttons, and levers. A bulldozer, a bale-fork, a robot coal-cutter, and other powerful mechanical implements can be as well operated by a woman as a man.

Of yet greater economic moment has been the revolution in domestic labour-saving appliances—the mass production of electric cookers, refrigerators, washing-machines, vacuum cleaners, and a variety of push-button electric gadgets—that, along with the food-processing and packaging revolution, has made the role of housewife (if not "home-maker") virtually expendable. To be sure, if she chooses to have children her daily presence in the home may be advisable for some years. But with the vocation of housewife all but rendered obsolete by the remorseless advance of technology, women who continued to stay at home were bound to feel cooped up, especially so in an increasingly mobile society. They were bound to become restless and nervous and to look anxiously for some occupational niche in the busy world outside the home.

WE MAY REASONABLY CONCLUDE that even in the absence of any Women's Liberation Movement the domestic-liberating innovations of men would have impelled increasing numbers of women to leave their homes in search of part-time or full-time employment elsewhere. It is also reasonable to assume that even without legislative measures industry would have adjusted accordingly. Initial prejudice and resistance from male workers or from trade unions would eventually have given way before the pressure of economic realities. Pay differentials in favour of men that were originally in excess of their efficiency differentials would of themselves increase the demand for women workers in all cost-conscious firms. Thus, even in the absence of Equal Pay Acts and Anti-Discrimination Acts[2] the process of competition itself would act over time to remove uneconomic pay differentials in all occupations toward which women were attracted. Unsophisticated statistical comparisons, an exercise in which feminists excel, may continue to obscure the facts, but the post-War trend toward effective equality of pay is all but complete.

Needless to say, the feminist jubilation which greeted these legislative victories provided no assurances of subsequent female gratification. The routine of daily work in factory, shop, or office, admittedly carries some compensations. But, as the novelty wears off and as females become integrated into the work-force, the degree of personal fulfilment falls below that anticipated by feminists—which occasions no wonder. Whatever the emoluments and incidental advantages, the daily occupation outside the home has never been regarded by working men as a particularly exhilarating experience.

[2] In addition to the *Equal Pay Act* of 1970 and the *Sex Discrimination Act* of 1975, the relevant legislation in Britain includes the 1961 *Factories Act* (extending the 19th-century legislation which regulated the hours of women working in industry), the 1975 *Employment Protection Act*, introducing maternity leave and pay rights (which rights were subsequently restricted by the 1980 *Employment Act*) and the 1980 *Social Security Act*, equalising social security between the sexes.

3. *The History Woman*

THE MOVEMENT for Women's Liberation, surcharged as it often is with high passion, also partakes of ideology, its devotees being possessed by the conviction that such a movement is vindicated by History—a long history marked by male privilege and patriarchal dominance and consequently, also, by female deprivation and subjugation. Thus, as with all ideologies, there is the belief in irrepressible teleological forces that ensure ultimate victory against inevitable reaction, bigotry, and ignorance: an ultimate victory, moreover, that is prelude to a new age of enlightenment.

These convictions naturally tend to breed a spirit of restiveness and impatience against the seeming obduracies of the Establishment. This spirit finds expression in the jarring rhetoric that both suffuses the speech of the fervent feminist and fills the columns of the more strident "libber" periodicals, perpetually engaged as they are in exposing "*MCPs*", in unearthing fresh evidence of "sexism", in detecting sinister signs of residual male arrogance in chance remarks at cocktail parties, and in generally perceiving amid the commerce and the trivia of life either subtle or blatant manifestations of "sex discrimination", "sex oppression", "sexual exploitation", "sexual degradation", *ad nauseam*.

Be this as it may, in North America where academic traditions are often more fragile than they are in Europe, and the curricula more flexible, the subjects taught at some institutions of higher learning exclude neither the exotic nor the trivial. For the courses that are offered, and their contents, are sensitive both to changing business requirements and to political fashions. It is not surprising therefore to discover that a number of universities, many of which had earlier succumbed to popular pressures to introduce those ill-fated *Black Studies* programmes, currently offer courses of *Women's Studies* as a serious academic option.

The main purpose of such studies, which invariably contain some potted history about the origins and protagonists of the Women's Movement, is not only to highlight women's achievements and to record political victories, but also to open the eyes of the female student to the many ways, overt and covert, by which women in the past are deemed to have suffered—and, indeed, continue to suffer—from the exploitation and repression of females that are inherent in the patriarchal form and bias of society. As one might expect, the staple sources of background information for such courses are the pamphlets, monographs, and anthologies written by feminists themselves. Recommended reading includes references to newly-founded feminist journals of history. For in response to crusading enthusiasm, droves of feminists have busied themselves poring over women's diaries, letters, autobiographies, novels, poems, and occasionally delving into the archives in search of evidence confirming and illustrating man's inhumanity to women.

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Even the more respectable women historians, swayed by the spirit of the times, believe that there is too much history about men or too little about women. While calling for new efforts to overcome "the androcentric bias" of records of the past, they find it easier to emit eloquent declarations of dissatisfaction about a history that is "ordered by male values" than to detail specific measures for "putting women back into the empty spaces of traditional history."

Exhortations to "rewrite women back into history" or to "reconstruct the female past" and other clarion calls to female historians to court popular feminist acclaim clearly imply that women have so far been "written out" of history. The obvious questions arise whether this has indeed been the traditional practice, and if so how (a question of method and technique) and why (a question of motive, conscious or unconscious).

In so far as history is a record of public life it will perforce be written in terms of the activities of the rulers, legislators, and decision-makers who were involved in the great events, and as such men will certainly preponderate. Allegations of male conspiracy or bias operating to make women "invisible in traditional history" founder on the fact that there are detailed histories of quite a number of female rulers—Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, Queen Victoria, to mention only those who jump to mind—and biographies of any number of famous and infamous women including, in Britain, Lady Hamilton, Florence Nightingale, Emily Pankhurst, Marie Stopes, Beatrice Webb, and others who have played a distinguishable role on the stage of history.

TO BE SURE, THE RECORD of the past *might* have been very different. We can imagine institutions within which women would have participated as fully as men in public life, and a set of beliefs and conventions that would have enabled them to contribute much more to industry and commerce, to the arts and the sciences. We may pass time agreeably debating how much better a world it would have been if such developments had taken place. But they did *not* take place. And since history is primarily an account of what did indeed take place, we have no choice but to resign ourselves to the possibly irksome fact that the chief actors on the stage of history were predominantly men, whether the history is that of political events or of political ideas, whether it is the history of science or technology, whether it is the history of music, art, or literature.

Social history, on the other hand, deals with family relations, with domestic activities, with customs, opinions and beliefs. The good social historian will pay special attention to women's attitudes and perceptions about life whenever he suspects that they may differ significantly from those of men within their own class or occupation. Indeed, what so many of us today want to know is just how people really felt about their lives, just what were the sources of their satisfaction, just what hopes and beliefs sustained them.[3] And it is entirely possible for a conscientious female historian to understand how various features of the existing legal system or of the contemporary technology, or of the prevailing customs or superstitions, could also produce tedium, vexation, or fear among both men and women in a variety of economic circumstances without—in deference to the new feminist enlightenment—selecting evidence of women's dissatisfactions and attributing them in the main to "a repressive system devised by men."

Nobody denies that the record of the past is incomplete: that further research will uncover personalities, male and female, hitherto unknown but deserving of the historian's attention; that new scholars will illuminate dark corners of history, so shifting accepted perspectives or reappraising current interpretations of critical episodes of our past. But such legitimate expectations are far removed from excitable anticipations of "a new conceptual framework" (whatever the academic cliché is supposed to mean in this connection) and from grandiose visions of rewriting "from a different perspective, the entire canon of existing history."[4]

Needless to conclude, when history is pressed into the service of a political movement it is unlikely to be good history. Just as Marxist studies seek principally or exclusively for evidence confirming Marxian theory, so feminist studies seek evidence tending to confirm feminist theory. Contrary, then, to accepted methods of scholarship, which test a hypothesis for evidence that may also be consistent with alternative hypotheses—for evidence, that is, which "disconfirms" the proposed hypothesis—the ideologue reads the sources with an eye to selecting only that which confirms his hypothesis.

TANGLEWOOD TALES of male repression garnered from these repeated forays into the past are gratuitous for another and more obvious reason. As the principal purpose of feminist history is to expose male privilege and authority, it is only too easy a task. Throughout the ages, almost without exception, authority resided formally in the male head of the family. He had rights in property and in law denied to women. Yet for the vast bulk of the population these formal privileges did not amount to very much. Even after the so-called Industrial Revolution of two centuries ago, by far the greater proportion of British families were employed in agriculture and living in material circumstances that offered only a limited margin of choice. Moreover (as sociologists are always at pains to remind us), authority and power are distinct attributes. There are not many periods in Western history during which it may reasonably be inferred that the influence of the mother in domestic affairs was markedly less than her husband's.[5]

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[3] See Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[4] The quoted phrases above are for the most part taken from a wonderfully evocative assortment larded into a short statement, "Women and Society" by Julia Philips in *History Today* (February 1984).

[5] In his survey of the literature on women in ancient Greece, David Harvey (*History Today*, August 1984) regards W. K. Lacey's *The Family in Classical Greece* (London, 1968) as a reliable guide to the past, and after quoting the ancient proverb, "*The mother is the soul of the house*", affirms his general conclusion that the place of the Greek woman was at the heart of her family. As he pertinently remarks:

> "Scholars have generalised from limited evidence: the 'seclusion' of women, for example, was surely an upper-class phenomenon, and women's life in the Attic countryside must have differed from life in the city."

See also in ENCOUNTER (May 1978), L. P. Wilkinson's study, "Classical Approaches, II: Women's Liberation."

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4. The Price of Male Privilege

As a rather pugnacious feminist once insisted, "The name of the game is *power*. . . ." It is not, however, the only game worth playing. Nor is it necessarily the best game. In order not to stretch the metaphor, let us agree that there are considerations bearing on the enjoyment of life no less important than—some would say: far more important than—the exercise of power. A popular pastime indulged in by men and women is that of describing the balance of advantages enjoyed by the opposite sex. Admittedly the arguments are controversial and inconclusive; yet a consideration of the question could add a dimension of realism to feminist debates. For if women have suffered in the past under varying institutional structures, the fact that these were shaped by men does not of itself preclude the possibility that men also suffered. In the perennial contention between the sexes for the crown of martyrdom the claims of men are not lightly to be dismissed.

Taking into account traditions of feuding and fighting, the slaughter of war and the savagery of dynastic struggles, it may be confidently asserted that men have behaved with greater cruelty towards other men than they ever have towards women. And it remains an open question whether women themselves have suffered more at the hands of other women than at the hands of men.

Even during periods of comparative peace, life was no picnic for the ordinary man. True, there is no lack of examples from the Middle Ages to the present of intelligent and spirited women chafing under domestic and social constraints. Yet it cannot be doubted either that, in consequence of institutional barriers, at least as many ambitious and talented men were consigned to suffer indignities and frustrations.

Taken as a whole, life has always been more abrasive and dangerous for the human male than for the female. Certainly his life expectancy has always been lower than hers even when account is taken of child-bearing risks to which she alone is exposed. Often engaged in physically exhausting occupations, the ordinary man in the past might become deformed or disabled before he was middle-aged. In the 18th century, for instance, he might be captured by a press-gang, virtually imprisoned for years within a sailing ship, housed below deck amid indescribable filth, poorly fed, brutalised, and forced to endure the perils of the sea—the risks of shipwreck, of capture by pirates, and of a cruel and lingering death. Other "privileges" included risks of military service, sometimes in faraway lands exposed to the ravages of hunger and disease and to sudden or slow death on blood-soaked battlefields. If he survived the months or years of campaigning, he might return scarred and disfigured, and so disabled as to be reduced to beggary for the rest of his life.

In the ancient world, the spoils of victory did indeed often include the women inhabiting the enemy towns and villages, many of whom would be ravished and sold into slavery. In contrast, the men and boys might be mercilessly mutilated and massacred. Moreover, slavery did not in general bear so hard on women, many of whom were used for domestic purposes or, if attractive, for sexual purposes. Although enforced prostitution, we may suppose, was endured with varying degrees of abhorrence or philosophy, it is implausible to believe that, given the choice, many of such women would have opted for the fate reserved for a large proportion of the male prisoners—sent to sweat and rot in the mines and quarries, whipped like curs chained to a galley-bench, or forced to battle to a gory death in the Circuses.

Looking at the allegation of male privileges in the light of such instances one begins to wonder whether the institutions of male domination have not also served, incidentally, to shelter women from the many cruel and degrading features of life to which men were exposed in the past. Taking the experience of life as a whole, it is doubtful if men ever really had the better of it.

5. Pornography—"Cherchez l'homme!"

A short time ago I came across a tired young woman seated at a table in New York's Grand Central station inviting people to sign a form protesting against pornography. I was glad to add my signature to the list in spite of the posters fixed to the table stating, as if it were as obvious as the spire on the Chrysler building, that "Pornography is Women-Hatred."

In any discussion of the subject it is prudent to recognise the validity of the idea of a spectrum of "sexploitation." But it is useful also to distinguish boldly between, on the one hand, erotica, well represented by "adult" cinema and by the more lubricious "girlie magazines" with their sex fantasy articles along with candid camera shots of plump mammaries, alluring bottoms and fleshy genitalia, and, on the other hand, the "hard porn" literature or cinema of the "video nasty" sort.

Concerning the former, the erotic stuff, the caption about "Women-Hatred" is ill-chosen. If the male readers of *Playboy* or *Penthouse* or *Oui* really hate women, it must be conceded that they conceal the fact pretty effectively—as, indeed, do the presumably male-hating female readers of *Playgirl* and other more recent publications of this genre. Judging the matter only from the readers' expressions, however, these carnally enticing photographs provide them with undiluted lascivious pleasure. To labour the glaringly obvious, far from hating the members of the other sex, they appear positively to dote on them.

Of course many feminists would regard such banal facts as irrelevant and assert that such literature and photographs are evidence of concealed hatred (or, rather, concealed contempt) of women because they are being depicted as "sexual objects"—such deeds being among the cardinal sins of High-Church feminism. As distinct from men, apparently, the new woman has officially to evince resentment whenever she suspects her male consort (or female consort?) to be regarding her as a "sexual object", possibly also during sexual intimacies—which, I imagine, puts a bit of a strain upon even the most willing and deferential male. It is surely more reasonable, though hardly necessary, to caution against regarding another person at all times as *only* a sex object—which is not that easy anyway. For all that, it is something of an impertinence to point an accusing finger only at men for promoting interest in erotica. Behind every male impresario, magazine publisher, or film producer stand queues of eager women only too anxious to cooperate.

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EROTICA AND PORNOGRAPHY are not new in history. Before World War II, however, they were kept within limits by convention and by censorship. The simple fact is that with the so-called sexual revolution of the early 1960s—which feminists have claimed as part of their liberation movement—enterprising men have availed themselves of the consequent reduction in censorship to make quick profits producing intimate cinema, peep-show magazines, sex-saturated novels and, later, sadistic video. It is evident by now, moreover, that the market for the sexually outlandish and sadistic is far from being exclusively male. And though within a heterosexual context it has been more common to depict women being sexually abused by men, scenes in which athletic or Amazonian women assault and abuse men also afford relish to *aficionados*, to say nothing of a brazen vogue for homosexual violence and lesbian victimisation.

There has always been a latent demand for sexually stimulating pictures and stories, and it would be unworldly or hypocritical to deny that sadistic scenes or scenes of carnal excesses excite as well as disgust. Aware of this human reaction, however, and fearing its disturbing effects on character and behaviour, a sensible society seeks to curb this latent appetite rather than to give it vent and impulse as is now done under the banner of freedom of expression.

Let it be said emphatically, moreover, that men are no less enraged by and antagonistic to these visible forms of popular porno-violence than women are, and no less concerned than women are about the longer-term effects on family life and on social behaviour. Nor have they been any less vociferous and persistent in their political opposition than women to the lack of control on porno products. Their arguments in favour of a discriminating censorship are at least as persuasive and sophisticated as those voiced by veteran women campaigners like Mary Whitehouse.[6]

6. *Sexual Emancipation—Goal or Fate?*

ATTRACTIVE THOUGH IT MUST BE to the anti-feminist lobby, the facile argument that the spread of pornography over the last three decades is itself a consequence of the Movement's struggle for sexual emancipation has to be resisted. It would be plausible only if the Women's Movement had indeed engineered this sexual revolution. But despite feminist claims to that effect, it can no more be accepted as an historical fact than their claims to have stormed the imperial ramparts of maledom and established an Equal-Opportunity economy. In fact, as we shall see presently, the post-War decline in the ideal of the virgin bride, a decline that is perceived by feminists as being symbolic of successful revolt against the tyranny of men, is more realistically perceived as a victory for men against the "tyranny" of women.

In earlier times, when being a housewife was regarded as being the one respectable lifetime occupation for a woman, her virginity—to put the matter crudely—became the key to the security and status offered by marriage: something, therefore, she could not easily afford to surrender until lawfully wed. Notwithstanding instances of rebellion and many lapses from the ideal, she invested it with a sanctity and guarded it as express testimony of her female honour.

At a time in modern history when, as a result of the technical innovations described earlier, woman's traditional role was undermined at the same time as she was able to avail herself of a widening horizon of opportunity in the economy, traditional attitudes towards women's sexuality had also to change. New economic conditions are such that they no longer act to reinforce the ideal of maiden chastity. And, admittedly, it is far more trying to the ambitious female today to remain celibate until married when marriage, if it comes, may have to be postponed until the age of 25 or 30, the age after which vocational training has been successfully completed and a career begun.

The economic factor itself has been conspicuously abetted by advances in medical science which have led to the universal availability in all the industrial countries of penicillin, antibiotics, and the introduction in 1960 of the contraceptive pill—and, where contraception fails, ready access to relatively safe and painless abortion. Thus, while the post-War economic transformation, which has been shunting women out of the home and into the work-force, has acted to erode the stigma of premarital sex, medical innovations have acted to remove the associated risks of disease and pregnancy.

AND THIS IS not all. The acclaimed sexual emancipation of women, swept forward by the economic and technical factors mentioned, is also an inseverable part of the so-called "permissive society" that has been borne on a flood-tide of unprecedented mass-prosperity resulting from the innovative and expansionist propensities of modern industry. Granted that the overriding imperative of our civilisation is secular economic growth—and the commercial striving to expand never flags, not even in deep recession—material satiation can be avoided and momentum maintained only by producing an endless flow of new models and consumer innovations and, of course, by massive advertising to ensure their continued absorption by the buying public. In pursuit of this economic-growth imperative, traditional norms of propriety and good taste, of moderation and restraint, were inevitably subverted. For a society that has discarded the idea of restraints or limits on self-indulgence, a society in which increasingly "anything goes" is also the kind of society in which virtually anything will sell. Thus, for the economies of the West at least, a permissive, indeed a promiscuous, society is a necessary condition for continued economic growth.

In sum, although sexual emancipation may have loomed large on the feminists' agenda, its advent was by no means one of the fruits of ideological enlightenment. Only after technical innovations had incidentally conferred economic independence on women, and only after medical innovations had minified the risks of unmarried sex, could female sexual emancipation become a reality. And, in the event, this sexual

[6] Some of the arguments and references to men campaigners are given in my article "Making the World Safe for Pornography" (ENCOUNTER, March 1972), later republished in a book of essays with the same title. For an early dissent from absolute permissiveness, see George Steiner's "Night Words" (ENCOUNTER, October 1965).

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emancipation took shape as an integral feature of that more comprehensive and far-reaching "permissive" transformation of the post-War world whose genesis can also be traced to economic and technical developments.

SINCE THE SEXUAL ASPECTS of the new permissiveness have heightened sexual awareness, diminished restraint, and diffused erotic and sadistic literature and films in the towns and cities of the West, it is hardly astonishing that sexual crimes have burgeoned. In particular, the incidence of rape—however defined—has been climbing without respite since the 1950s. Understandable though this trend is to the conservative mind, it may be worth touching upon some of the links connecting this untoward development with the licentiousness that is characteristic of the new permissiveness.

One is the now prevailing fashion for schoolgirls scarcely in their teens—and with the aid and facilities provided by state-supported clinics—to engage as a matter of course in carnal experiments with either sex or both. In consequence, men have come to believe that refusal by a young woman to submit to their sexual overtures no longer springs from a traditional resolution to maintain her maiden honour (as it was reasonable to believe in less sexually promiscuous times) or indeed from any objection in principle to fornication. They are, therefore, all the more apt to resent such a refusal as a personal rebuff, or else to see in it a ruse or an affectation designed to excite their passion. This view of the matter is consistent with the statistical evidence: only a small proportion of reported rape—about one-fifth in North America—is street rape.

Another connecting link is the tendency of popular pornography, as exhibited in "adult" cinema and novels, to implant in the more gullible male mind the suspicion that every young woman is secretly yearning to be physically overcome, secretly panting for those celebrated thrusts, recorded in song and story (not to mention joyful guidebooks), that will release her uncontrollable ecstasy. Exposed as he is to repeated scenes of sexual violence followed by sexual surrender, he comes to believe that a masterful display of force is needed to unmask and to inflame a woman's passion. He also runs the risk of succumbing to bizarre and aberrant fantasies that so distort his conception of sexual pleasure as to thwart normal forms of gratification, so breeding a frustration and despair that relieve themselves in violence.

Whatever the causes, the resulting trend in sexual violence has been pointedly exploited by feminist organisations through the use of political tactics. I am thinking in particular of their success over the last few years in redirecting cases of sexual assault from ordinary hospital emergency units to newly-financed, highly publicised, purpose-built, hot-line "rape clinics" that frequently enough (in North America, at least) also serve as centres of feminist indoctrination.

Such pointedly segregated rape clinics exude an aura of female antagonism. Indeed, being in the nature of monuments to the external martyrdom of the female sex, the sensitive libber may be forgiven for surrendering occasionally to spasms of male-hatred or for regarding this historic and peculiar male offence—from which all women are, of biological necessity, guiltless—with excruciating emotions.

7. *Neo-Feminism: Refinement, Retrenchment, or Retraction?*

IN THE EARLY 1970s the Women's Movement was agog with hope and anticipation. Ten years later, following extensive legislation putatively designed to advance women's rights and opportunities, the momentum appears to be flagging even though it is far from being spent. Feminist books, pamphlets, and journals continue to pour from the presses, keeping fresh the ubiquitous image of "Big Sister", reporting the heroic exploits of women, reminding the faithful to be ever-vigilant against the machinations of a male-dominated establishment, and in the process applying themselves to the sisyphean task of "desexifying" the English language.

In this connection, although I had intended to resist all temptations to move away from a consideration of the common core of feminist doctrine, I relent only to the extent of allowing myself some brief comments on the rhetoric and liturgies favoured by the Movement.

In its milder form, feminist voodooism confines itself largely to the by now familiar Newspeak: to the tiresome substitution of "*person*" for "*man*", of "*fishers*" for "*fishermen*", of "*firepeople*" (or "*firefighters*") for "*firemen*" and so on; to the popular sporting of the prefix *Ms*, this being emblematic of disenthralment from an insidious chauvinism that distinguishes a *Mrs* from a *Miss*; and to the general employment of the contempt word *macho* as standard replacement for such adjectives as *masculine* or *manly*.

Among other authorised *interdicta* is the voicing of traditional feminine nouns such as "Jewess", "actress", "waitress", "abbess", and so on (possibly "princess" and "goddess" also) because of their alleged derogatory connotation—tigress being a female tiger. Rigid observance of these verbal ordinances and embargoes, it must be supposed, will go some way to purging the air of baleful patriarchal influence.[7]

The wearisome clichés that have become the *passe-paroles* of the Movement and are ritually aired at those enervating women's pop sessions dedicated, *inter alia*, to unmasking "false consciousness", to affirming "women's rights over their own bodies" or "over their own destinies", to asserting a woman's need "to define her own sexuality" or "to discover her female identity"—in short, dedicated to emitting a deal of other trumpety imperatives equally impervious to rational argument—would form a subject of fascinating study to the psychologist or political philosopher.[8] If they are touched upon here, it is simply to record that, notwithstanding popular tolerance of them as being currently an inescapable part of the

[7] I am sad to have to report that a number of the weaker-minded brethren in the universities, anxious to be counted among the newly enlightened, are now to be seen making genuflections in the direction of Broad-Church feminism. Their memoranda, their proffered manuscripts and occasional journal papers, are duly peppered with "he or she" and "s/he", and "his or her", thereby making ungainly reading of what otherwise might have been merely dull.

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social scene,[8] the last decade has been one of hesitation and heart-searching, of growing dissonance within the Movement and of growing antagonism without.

FRAGMENTATION AND REVISIONISM is a fate common to all broad ideological movements, and the Women's Liberation Movement has not escaped it. Already among members of the feminist intelligentsia doubts and second thoughts are being expressed about its tactics, about the validity of its rhetoric, and about its insensitivity to new developments. There are even doubts about whether the Movement has on balance conferred any real benefits on women.

For all practical purposes, equal economic opportunity has been realised, as, indeed, it was bound to be. Economists are in broad agreement that—once account is taken of the occupational pattern of female employment, of hours worked, of variations in efficiency, and of other relevant factors—there are no longer significant pay differentials as between the sexes. But since women are still clustered in the lower-paid occupations, and since a large proportion of them work only part-time, their annual earnings average about 60% of those of men.

Apart from routine complaints of "job discrimination" and ceremonial conference exhortations for the need to realise women's "full potential", the Movement has recently sought to upgrade women's economic status by two stratagems. In North America, for instance, it has succeeded in persuading the Federal Government to include Women, along with Blacks and Hispanics, among the "protected minorities" who are to receive preferential treatment as laid down in Affirmative Action legislation. In effect, they have become the beneficiaries of a form of "negative discrimination" implemented by a quota system requiring that each of the "protected minority" groups be represented in all occupations roughly in proportion to their numbers in the population at large. And it goes without saying that a minority whose numbers exceed 50% of the entire population is entitled to more political attention than minorities below 50%. (In an Orwellian year it may be permitted to remark that all minorities are necessarily less than 50%; but some minorities are more.)

This particular stratagem however does not speak loudly for the abounding confidence that continues to be exhibited at feminist gatherings. Nor has it been a resounding success. The dismal failure to meet the quotas in all the higher echelons of government and industry has continued to be a source of embarrassment to government officials and of exasperation to feminists. This failure is most striking among university teaching staffs, and is attributable simply to a persistent lack of qualified female candidates. (It is naive to attribute it to male discrimination, as feminists are expected to do, since the universities have the strongest incentives to meet minority quotas—being heavily dependent upon Federal funds which are made contingent upon evidence of continuing endeavour to fill them.)

The consequent pressure on American universities to recruit women from the limited talent-pool available, however, has had the unfortunate but quite predictable effect of reducing the credibility of women lecturers and research workers. A tacit presumption has arisen both among university personnel and the public at large that a female lecturer or executive would not quite have "made the grade" in the absence of pressures exerted on institutions and corporations by the Affirmative Action bureaucracy. Thus the Affirmative Action professional has come to be regarded by the sceptical public with a mixture of condescension and suspicion. (A common dig: "*Would you agree to fly with an airline known to employ Affirmative Action pilots?*")

Such presumptions and suspicions are clearly unfair to those women (and to members of other "protected minorities") who would have been awarded the degree or selected for the post even in the absence of such a programme. The resulting stigma they have to bear is the price which many hard-working and competent women have to pay for the political astigmatism of the Movement.

Women of New Virtue

THE FACT THAT about 50% of women of working age are currently employed in industry is apparently a source of deep gratification to Women's Lib. Their expectations that this proportion is likely to grow are sure to be fulfilled whether the Movement continues or not, and whatever form it may take. The occupational profile of women, however, continues to belie the hopes of the feminists. Despite much heady propaganda about women's new image and their outstanding achievements, the Movement has been singularly unsuccessful in its endeavours to shift women out of the secretarial and nursing occupations—scornfully referred to at one time by impatient libbers as "the helping profession"—and into other currently male-dominated occupations and positions. Notwithstanding the effusion of success stories which are a regular feature of feminist periodicals, the proportion of women in the more prestigious executive and professional circles is still depressingly low.

Deciding finally to grasp this nettle—the unpalatable but inescapable fact of women's strong partiality for "the helping profession"—the sisterhood has come up with a new stratagem, one that makes a virtue of necessity by proclaiming the

[8] Instances of the sheer inanity which characterises the statements of those members of the sisterhood scattered along the broad lunatic fringe of the Movement deserve a footnote if only for the comic relief they afford.

According to a short article in *Spare Rib* (January 1977), a woman commenced proceedings against a stockbroking firm that, having failed to persuade her not to sport her *Lesbians Ignite* badge in the office, finally dismissed her. Her plea, heard in a roomful of lesbian badge-wearing supporters, that she wore the badge on principle in order "to confirm her identity" and to guard against people's assuming she was a heterosexual, apparently failed to impress the industrial tribunal.

Another example is the statement, reported in the *Daily Mail* (17 March 1984), of a certain Ms Thomas engaged, among other things, in working for a lesbian hot-line: "We believe", she said, "that the development of women-only spaces are essential for the growth of a positive identification of women's capabilities and strengths."

Why such restraint? Surely it is self-evident that the full female bloom can be achieved only within a *women-only* geographical reserve, where the inmates can loll meditatively beneath *women-only* trees, enveloped in a purified *women-only* atmosphere?

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discovery of a refined calculus for assessing the *true* worth to society of women's work. In the event a dozen or so feminist organisations in the US have been waging a campaign with the object of legally establishing a unique economic principle, that of "comparable worth." Americans seldom do this sort of thing by halves and, in this instance, a number of prominent consulting firms were contracted to devise an original system of "pure" job evaluation. By concocting a formula that assigned high points for those newly-acknowledged high female qualities such as "*caring*" and "*understanding*", hypothetical rates of remuneration emerged that were naturally quite different from those prevailing in the economy. As anticipated, they turned out to be very favourable for the highly popular female occupations such as nursing, primary school teaching, and secretarial services.

The declared intent of the advocates of the "comparable worth" doctrine is, then, to introduce legislation designed to correct the "male bias" of the market—in effect, the familiar forces of demand and supply. Exactly how this is to be accomplished is, as yet, far from clear. Needless to say, economists are apt to be sceptical about the feasibility of all legislative measures designed specifically to combat or suspend market forces.[9]

IN STARK CONTRAST, THEREFORE, to the spirit of Affirmative Action, the "comparable worth" doctrine builds on the revised notion that women are no longer merely the equal of men: they are different from men, and better.

Now, the inspiration for this unabashedly opportunistic credo which has fuelled the "comparable worth" campaign may be traced back to the ruminations to be found in Betty Friedan's recent offering, *The Second Stage* (1981). Contrary to the thesis of her 1963 book where, in respect of potential achievement, the assumption of sexual parity informed both the arguments and the proposals, the weight of argument in the 1981 book turns about a crucial distinction—that between the male's "*alpha-mode thought*" (direct, aggressive, abstract, analytic) and the female's "*beta-mode thought*" (intuitive, qualitative, flexible, wholesome). This pseudo-psychological terminology may charitably be overlooked, being rather a forlorn attempt to mute the hilarity of the rediscovery by the Minerva of the feminist enlightenment that a woman's nature is rather different from a man's. To all intents and purposes she also endorses the age-old sentiment that "a woman's nature will not be denied", evidence for which in her book is mention of the number of successful career women today in North America who, childless in their late thirties, are struggling against "the biological clock", desperate to bear babies.

Betty Friedan is not the only member of the old guard who has been assailed by second thoughts, who has suffered pangs of dismay at the course events have taken, whose convictions have been shaken by the soaring figures of divorce in America, which trebled between 1950 and 1980. In newspaper interviews and in her recent book, *Sex and Destiny*, so charismatic a feminist as Germaine Greer has been deploring the decline in family life and the unbridled promiscuity of teenaged girls today. Like Betty Friedan she is dismayed by the unprecedented increase in the number of abandoned wives, broken homes, and one-parent families, and appalled by the continuing growth of abortion and venereal disease.[10] She has even some nice things to say about Mary Whitehouse.

But if Friedan's New Testament version of Women's Liberation comes to prevail, what will become of the old Movement? For it is not merely a small change of direction or a small shift of perspective that is at issue. Although, as a venerated protagonist of the Movement, Friedan herself is bound to rationalise her overt and covert retractions as marking a new stage in the evolution of feminism, the general tenor of the Friedan Mark II thesis, along with the "comparable worth" doctrine, clearly amounts to a radical revision of the feminists' self-image. If accepted, the revised version of feminism would entail a drastic reconstitution of the Movement since it would have now to pursue aims and policies basically incompatible with the older, more conventional and militant version. The fury, on reading these two recent books, of their sister feminists is easy to understand. For if they were to be accepted they would surely invert the Movement's ideological centrepiece. Indeed, such "post-feminist" reflections and proposals might easily be made to assume a form more congenial to, and barely distinguishable from, the more traditional old-fashioned view of women's nature.

[9] A fascinating account of the campaign supporting the "comparable worth" principle, along with ironic commentary, is to be found in Rachel Flick's article, "The New Feminism and the World of Work", *The Public Interest* (Spring, 1983).

[10] In 1980 there were 600,000 babies born to unmarried mothers in the US, which was more than four times the number in 1950. Nearly half of these 600,000 births were, incidentally, to girls of 19 years or under.

In 1978, a million-and-a-half abortions were legally performed, this being three times the number performed in 1972. About half-a-million of these abortions were performed on girls of 19 years and under. As for Britain, according to a BBC broadcast (26 June 1984) one in five teenaged unmarried girls become pregnant each year, and the abortion rate among this group has trebled over the last ten years.

Turning to venereal diseases which began to decline after World War II, although syphilis has continued to decline, the number today suffering from gonorrhea in the US is over one million, almost four times the number in 1960.

(*U.S. Statistical Abstracts*, 1980 and 1982)

8. *The Bitter Taste of Success*

IN THE EXPRESSIONS of cynicism about and disillusion with the Movement that are coming to the surface, women have been more forthcoming and articulate than men. The popular feminist caricature of motherhood as a form of female slavery, in which the woman is chained to a routine of diaper-washing, exhausting errands, and incessant catering to unruly toddlers, has been attacked by many women, among them Midge Decter. "The passions and devotions of motherhood", she insists:

> "are . . . more than the imposition of the needs of the species on smothered and starving individuals. That children themselves offer a considerable amount of meaning to life—I will not even mention pleasure—is a notion almost lost in

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the feverish mists of feminism. . . . Women continue to long for children and continue to act on that longing."

Policy Review (September 1981, pp. 51-2)

A more down-to-earth antagonism is expressed in Canadian housewife Nancy Wigen's recent letter:

"My heritage as a woman, a wife and mother, a supportive and loving person to my husband is given zero points by the feminist movement. . . . Men haven't hurt me, women have. I don't want fame, fortune, power and a pseudo-male rat race. . . . Twelve years ago I was in Russia. Women there wanted freedom—freedom to stay at home with their children—85% of which were raised by institutions. . . ."

Monday World (25 March, 1983)

As for the hackneyed feminist picture of the ideal marriage, a marriage of thoroughgoing equality in its every aspect, not only does it reject the traditional husband-and-wife relationship, it rejects also the idea of fidelity as a conjugal virtue. The notion of marriage as the consummation of a romance has given way among feminists to the notion of marriage as a domestic arrangement analogous to the formation of a limited liability partnership. Implementation of such approved equal-sharing marriage contracts, however, involves systematic assessment and scrutiny of the behaviour of one spouse by the other. Its continuance is understood to be contingent upon each of the partners being satisfied with the performance of the other. Thus the conception of the even-handed open-ended marriage partnership, one in which *trust* is to be supplanted by *contract,* has been fostered by the Movement and, incidentally, facilitated by the massive women's rights legislation of the early 1970s.

These ultra-equitable partnerships, however, are unlikely to be very successful. Mutual vigilance erodes mutual trust. Duty rotas stifle spontaneity. And the claims of "selfhood" come to override the claims of the family. The strain on each of the spouses in such a partnership is further increased inasmuch as the pattern of behaviour entailed by the equal-sharing ideal conflicts at points with the innate biological urges that tend to actuate role differentiation. Indeed, in the absence of distinct and tacitly accepted roles, grounded in experience and tradition, a proper husband-and-wife relationship cannot take root and blossom.

Inevitably, however, this equal-partnership theory of modern marriage has come to tinge our ideas of propriety—to the extent at least of encouraging some male advances in the direction of the kitchen sink. Some middle-class husbands, especially those with wives working outside the home, are willing to concede the principle of housework-sharing. Yet as feminists are quick to point out, they are rather less eager to act on the principle.

Perhaps the feminists are not altogether surprised. They ought not to be. Russian women were the first to be subjected to economic liberation. Among the unanticipated perquisites of their liberation they discovered that they were not, after all, required to sacrifice their full-time role as housewives in return for the privilege of a full-time job in industry. And as it turned out, one of their two full-time jobs, the unpaid one, continued to be very much full-time as their less liberated husbands revealed, if not a persistent disinclination, certainly a persistent ineptitude for housework.

The British and American housewife, having far more kitchen gadgetry at her elbow, is not so hard done by as her Russian sister. None the less, whatever housework has to be done she generally does the bulk of it, whether she works part time or full time in industry—helped, occasionally, by that dwindling species, the "cleaning lady."

The Real Beneficiaries

IN THE MEANTIME more thoughtful anti-feminist views have been taking shape, much of which focuses on the heavy cost to women of their putative emancipation. As Mary Kenny has written:

"Feminism has, above all, benefited men. Once, a man might have been expected to stick loyally by the wife he married or, if he abandoned her, to pay the price in support and responsibility. Liberalised divorce laws have altered that. Once, in the 1950s, there was some gentlemanly idea around that a chap didn't play fast-and-loose with a lady (or, if he wasn't good, he'd be careful). Now, contraception is the responsibility of women, and if a pregnancy takes place it is her right to choose; moreover, if she chooses abortion, in half the cases the taxpayer picks up the bill.

Once, a man was expected to support his wife and family: now a wife is expected to support herself (and if she should request support when a marriage is dissolved, she will be called an 'alimony drone' by other women). At home, men still generally enjoy the traditional comforts of wifely care: at work, they enjoy the added pleasures of more women than ever working with them (although generally in inferior positions). Once, even within my memory, men did not swear in front of women or take undue advantage of them—well, some limits were observed. Now, as the newly documented evidence of widespread sexual harassment has made clear, men at work feel that since women are liberated, all are fair game."[11]

It does not surprise Mary Kenny then that there has been no "male backlash" against the Women's Liberation Movement. "Why should there be? The Women's Movement has been wonderful for men."

Although her observations are acute, Miss Kenny's final judgment, engagingly ironic though it be, is only superficially true. To be sure, one of the recurring male fantasies is that of wandering through a magic world thronged with luscious women tumbling over themselves to seduce him. Although men have not yet stumbled into this sexual El Dorado, they are today closer to abandoning sexual taboos than at any time in history. And the promiscuity of the new woman, irrespective of class or family, does not lag so very far behind that of the average man. Over the last decade in North America there has been a phenomenal increase in newspaper and magazine small-ads by women explicitly in search of sexual partners. And, catering to a new "female chauvinist" appetite, a proliferation of erotic magazines like *Playgirl* displaying pictures of sexy

[11] Mary Kenny, "In the Driver's Seat", ENCOUNTER, February 1983.

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male nudes, to say nothing of the growth within the major cities and resorts of male-stripper entertainment.

Men's enjoyment of the women's "sexual revolution", or more accurately the growing libertinism of the permissive society, is marred, however, in some degree by undercurrents of anxiety. Not all fathers are reconciled to the current tendency for their unwed daughters to indulge in sexual intimacies as a matter of course. The centuries-old ideal of the virgin bride is not so lightly to be abandoned. And still common among family men is a conception of the home as a shelter or sanctuary against the defiling influences of a corrupting metropolis—that much harder to maintain when the home itself is infiltrated by sound and visual media; by television programmes competing to enrapture a mass audience.

At all events, a more qualified assessment of the alleged benefits to men is offered by Midge Decter in explaining the seeming lack of

> "male resistance to the indictments of Women's Liberation. Their passivity can only be understood in terms of the movement's pernicious appeal to the apparent short-term interest of men. If the women were refusing to accept the burden of womanliness, they were providing men with a perfect opportunity to be rid of the burden of manliness. After all, manliness can also be called a burden as onerous as womanliness, if not more so. . . .
>
> So it is that more and more men are ceasing to be true husbands and fathers. Here we have the real consequences of the so-called role-less marriage. It is after all quite easy for a man to carry out the garbage and do the dishes and even wash the diapers. These are as nothing compared with the weight of being a real husband. Thus in the course of letting themselves off the hook of responsibility, women are also, of course, letting men off that same hook. Thus wives and husbands are currently engaged in avoiding all the things they call onerous but that are in fact life-giving and health-giving."
>
> *Policy Review* (September 1981 p. 51)

In short, in the process of emancipating themselves so as to enjoy the expanding horizons of economic and sexual opportunity, women were ineluctably repudiating traditional female responsibilities—as a result of which men also have begun to repudiate traditional male responsibilities.

THIS GROWING ABDICATION from the traditional responsibilities of marriage is, however, only part of the difficulty. For the independent career-oriented wife cherished by feminists is hardly compatible with an enduring love relationship. The essential humility necessary to surrender to the experience of love is an emotional condition that does not comport well with the committed career-woman who has learned to place inordinate value on personal and financial independence. If she is ever to contemplate matrimony, she takes pride in being firm about the tangible inducements. In particular, it must "work" for *her*. It must not "tie her down" in the home. It must not be a drag on her progress in her chosen vocation.

There may, of course, be some magic formula that enables a peculiarly gifted woman to extract from her marriage both material advantages and domestic bliss, to remain both a free agent and a devoted wife: a formula that enables her as a mother to fully enjoy her children while striding ahead in her career. But the ordinary woman cannot reasonably hope to achieve this harmony of divergent aspirations.[12]

Again, feminist idealisation of the more open and experimental marriage necessarily encourages more casual marriage and as a corollary more casual divorce also. To the spouses cautiously exploring the implications of equal sharing in the role-less marriage, any initial discord, hardship, or tedium—even the chance encounter with a seemingly more attractive or successful person—can become the pretext for dissolving the marriage, often leaving their children to cope as best they can with the psychological débris of a broken home.

FINALLY, A BRIEF REMINDER. Whatever the verdict of the feminist, the neo-feminist, or the non-feminist, and however each of them assesses the claims or the apparent consequences of the Women's Movement, the prudent historian will hesitate to impute to it the developments associated with its declared aims. As indicated earlier, the *sexual* emancipation of women acclaimed and initially applauded by feminists would have been impossible without the discovery and easy availability of penicillin and the contraceptive pill and, in the last resort, relatively painless abortion.

Again, the basic elements in any explanation of the post-War permissive society—which permissive society comprehends and animates the sexual emancipation of women—are, as already mentioned, the innate expansionist propensities still active in the post-industrial economics of the West and the character of their technical transformation that has taken place over the past few decades. And this technical transformation was the pre-condition, indeed the *sine qua non*, of women's so-called *economic* emancipation.

9. *Awaiting "Some Great White Daybreak"*

EVERY POLITICAL MOVEMENT that perceives itself as destined to ignite a mass revolution also embraces a millenarian vision. The articulated sense of grievance uniting the movement gains strength and legitimacy from the collective conviction of a cosmic harmony that will naturally prevail once the tangled roots of a rotting system have been extirpated. In the meantime, of course, there are those omnipresent forces of repression to be exposed, reaction to be combated, inertia to be overcome—a struggle to be waged along with other victims of oppression the world over.

Thus many an innocent feminist is near-intoxicated today by the idea that the Women's Movement in essence involves, as

[12] About as much confidence may be reposed in reported statements by equal-sharing and role-less marriage partners of their experience of true marital harmony as in, say, the statements of devoted Bolsheviks in the 1920s that they experienced true freedom only after the October Revolution.

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Vivian Gornick puts it,[13] "a single-generation effort" through which "the emotional habits of thousands of years" have radically to be transformed. And if she exults in the thought that the number of women students in the social and natural sciences is becoming closer to 50% and if also—much like vociferous members of other "protected minorities"—she is apt to harp repeatedly on women's outstanding contributions to the nation, it is not only because of the seeming compulsion among feminists continually to reassure themselves that they are not a whit less intelligent and gifted than men but also because all such trifling indices are to the fanatic libber "confirmations strong as proofs of holy writ."

The belief that the key to historical insight is the idea of continual struggle has enjoyed a universal reception. And certainly the idea of a struggle for territory or for natural resources is a component in any wide-ranging explanation of conflict in history. Nor for that matter should we ignore the light that may be shed on the past by theories of struggle between economic classes or between ethnic groups, or the struggle between mutually hostile religions or between competing ideals and ideologies. Some audacious PhD student may yet surprise us by a thesis that interprets history as a struggle between philanthropists and misanthropists, or between optimists and pessimists.

As females comprise a little over half the human race and have so far, and in despite of admonitory voices emanating from the lesbian fringe of the Movement, continued to communicate and cohabit with the male half, neither is there much harm in viewing history also as a study in changing sex relations. There is no one single or best way of looking at the whole canon of history. So long as one shuns doctrinairism and has respect for the evidence, so long as one is ready to ask new questions and to consider new theses, one has in one the making of an honest historian. Only the fanatic spirit believes that the light shed on the past can be truly revealing when it shines wholly from one direction and, in doing so, also illuminates the shape of the future.

This imperative need to transform "the emotional habits of thousands of years", envisioned by many impassioned feminists, is one of those devouring ideas that may be expected to surface during volcanic periods of history when the young in particular are impatient to remould the world to their hearts' desire. Like all sweeping proposals to reshape the social order, this one also is grounded in a belief in the infinite perfectibility of man and often enough in the presupposition that our primeval nature is basically noble though—as Rousseau believed—too long corrupted by a vile system. Such fundamentalist preconceptions are, of course, in sharp contrast to what we might call the conservative or Burkean ones marked as they are by an ingrained scepticism of revolutionary proposals and by a strong presumption in favour of viable institutions that have withstood the test of time. Changes may be contemplated, albeit cautiously, only in response to cogent argument and overwhelming evidence—a political maxim that is reflected incidentally in Dr Johnson's curt opinion that "the remedies for the miseries of life are palliative, not radical."

[13] In a rapturous and apocalyptic statement published in the journal *In These Times* (October 1981).

The dictum is that much more apropos when it is considered that "the miseries of life" from which the Women's Movement is seeking liberation are by no means such as command universal agreement. Commenting on Sheila Rothman's recent book, *Woman's Proper Place,* Brigitte Berger has written:

> "To Muslim women, finally relieved by modernization of enforced drudgery on the land, there is considerable satisfaction in their new situation in the separate world of the family. To women under Communism, liberation would probably mean the chance for the first time *not* to work—to live the life they imagine a Western capitalist woman lives, with an abundance of consumer goods, freedom to move about, holidays and leisure time for their families and themselves. It is only to the small segment of women living in the West—in particular those living in the United States—that work appears as the only possible salvation to that dilemma of loss of identity which is endemic in the modern world." *Commentary* (March 1979)

The Western feminists' conception of Women's Liberation is therefore quite a parochial phenomenon. And it is hard to decide which of the twin articles of faith held by the overwrought core of the Lib Movement in the West is the more incredible—the unquestioned desirability of transforming within a single generation "the emotional habits of thousands of years" or the unquestioned belief in its historic necessity. One thing, at least, is quite certain: the vehemence and the vigour of the Liberation Movement in the West did not originate in any settled conviction that it would promote family harmony, social serenity, or moral progress. The revolutionary animus issued primarily from its appeal to power—the power to expropriate power that, it is believed, has too long remained a male preserve.

IT IS MORE THIS STRIDENT SPIRIT of conquest than visions of cosmic harmony which continues to inspire and exhilarate the Movement. Thus women speakers are now expected on all public occasions to produce rousing examples of women's new achievements and to report on the gratifying progress being made toward "eliminating the gender gap" or, more militantly, "breaching the gender barrier" (a phase reminiscent of engineers' earlier obsession with breaking through the sound barrier, heedless alike of consequence or inconsequence). These can be depended upon to produce a whiff of predatory excitement among the feminists in the audience or to trigger off a spasm of triumph. And since the number of women working in industry, and also the number in high office, is sure to grow over the next decade as a result both of economic and political forces, there will be no lack of "progress reports" and of occasions for feminist jubilation.

Yet the fact of the matter is that the policies and the propaganda, the tactics and the rhetoric, employed by the feminist movement in that (arguably unnecessary) struggle to wrest power from the imperious male, and to liberate the female from domestic servitude and other forms of alleged oppression—in a bid to ensure that she obtained her full share of the kudos and the shekels in every field of endeavour—have

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also made significant contributions to the growth and the power of bureaucracies. It is indeed ironic that a so-called *liberation* movement, through its numerous organisational forms, has deliberately sponsored such ambitious programmes of legislation that the extension in the number and powers of government agencies deemed necessary for their enforcement has served to bloat the already swollen powers of the state and, therefore, to constrict further our individual liberties.

Less immediately perceptible but no less potent are the consequences of the Movement's propaganda, political tactics, and its sponsored legislation upon the relation between the sexes, upon the quality of family life, and upon the character and capacity for enjoyment of the women themselves. We may legitimately debate these consequences but only a fanatic would dismiss the possibility that they could be deleterious.

More generally, the doctrinaire arrogance of the more familiar and as yet more popular Mark-I feminist looks to be little else than a corroboration and an augmentation of 20th-century man's own arrogance toward his natural habitat which effectively sanctioned his relentless assault on the environment. Only too eager to participate in engineering new institutions for an atomistic equal-opportunity welfare-controlled society, she is technocratic man's equal in acknowledging no external or internal limits to social change. Yet she has completely misjudged the extent of her power and the nature of her achievement. Far from riding the wave of the future, as she fondly imagines, she is in fact (as I have suggested earlier) being borne along willy-nilly—being swept out of the home and into industry—by a tidal wave set in motion by technological developments that, as it happens, also threaten to engulf and destroy civilisation.[14]

In this connection I am thinking not only of the fearsome risks of a nuclear conflagration nor even of the biospheric hazards—arising from the widespread use of new chemicals, from ozone depletion, soil-erosion, forest-destruction, over-fishing, and population overspill. I am thinking also of the philistine propensities within the prosperous media-soaked populistic democracies that threaten to culminate in cultural nihilism. For there has been a slow corrosion since World War II of the moral infrastructure of our civilisation, accompanied, as it has been, by the submergence of a once-dominant middle-class tradition of decorum and taste in a rising tide of hedonic promiscuity—the consequence of commercially exploited mass affluence.

IN THE WEST AS A WHOLE, a persisting trend of insensate violence along with increasing recourse to civil disorder and to widespread defiance of the law has begun to cast shadows of doubt on the continuing viability of the libertarian's "open society", and has already shattered the credibility of that comfortable 19th-century belief that moral progress would follow as a matter of course from material progress and mass education.

[14] A thesis aired in my ENCOUNTER article, "To Grow or Not to Grow" (May 1973).

[15] The quoted passages are from her article in the *New York Times Magazine* (27 February 1983).

10. *In Conclusion*

LITTLE CAN BE FOUND in Betty Friedan's Second Stage of the Women's Revolution that offers hope of escape from these and other portentous developments. Some guarded deprecations of the prevalence of "masculinism" within the Movement may win friends but will not influence people. Her airy remarks about the need for men to "develop the flexibility and sensitivity to their own feelings and the feelings of others—the attunement to life that has been considered up to now feminine", tempt the imagination with the picture of a grandmotherly Polonius gently chiding an errant, *macho* Laertes, imparting new Mark II significance to the classic admonition: "This above all, to thine own self be true. . . ." Perhaps one should not be too severe on Mrs Friedan's euphonious *obiter dicta*. After all, granted that in the Movement's first stage, women needed to become a little "masculinised" in order to be "attuned to life", is it so unreasonable to expect that in its second stage men should submit to being a little "feminised"?

Yet her agenda, stripped of its pretentious jargon, its cuddly phrases, and its clarion calls, boils down to nothing more substantial than exhortations to women to consolidate their gains, to combat reaction, and for the rest to arraign themselves with the forces of enlightenment and progress in an unremitting endeavour to humanise industry, to preserve the family, and to join the struggle to "surmount the dangers of nuclear war, terrorism, and economic chaos."[15]

Nor will her rapturous anticipation of wondrous things to come, instil much confidence or arrest apprehensions. To quote her rhetorical question:

> "What new dimensions will emerge in every field as women begin to find that different voice, their own voice, and use it in medicine, law, theology, architecture, in all the arts and sciences!"

What indeed! If that distinct and authentic women's voice has anything at all of importance to say about the larger issues, it had better speak soon and to the point. For the sands of time may well be running out for the democracies of the West. Authoritarian censors, male and female, are waiting in the wings.

TO CONCLUDE, irrespective of differences in phase or faction, the Women's Movement cannot properly be described as a revolutionary organisation *necessary to* and *responsible for* the sweeping post-War changes in the lives of women. The circumspect historian of the Movement, at any rate, will regard the phenomenon primarily as a political reflection of that underlying and fundamental economic transformation which has taken shape over the past four decades in response to a virtual eruption of new technologies. The search for perspective may incline him to add that it was by no means the only political or social movement of the period whose causes could be traced back to scientific and technical innovation; and although it succeeded in maintaining an inordinately high profile it was hardly the most significant.

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As an aside, our historian might legitimately conjecture that, like so many other trends and fashions in post-War movements—including pop religions, spiritual nostrums, health therapies, mystic cults, along with ethnic jingoism, homosexual militancy and, more recently, the mushroom spread over North America of sectarian communities of "Survivalists"—the lure of feminism was in part symptomatic of the frenzied search for identity in an increasingly anonymous society. At best it was yet another desperate attempt to create community and meaning in a seemingly purposeless universe. Although, as such, it may elicit his sympathy, our historian may have to conclude that, taking its record as a whole, the Women's Liberation Movement was also a social and ideological force acting to accelerate the disruptive currents that, during the critical last decades of the 20th century, were undermining the stability of the already beleaguered libertarian civilisations of the West, so helping to clear the way for the emergence of a new totalitarianism—initially, perhaps, a democratic totalitarian state, but no less oppressive for all that.

The Blackthorn Spray

As the wheels of the hearse
unreeled the road
downhill, they slowed
to let the milkman pass.
His white van showed
in the black-framed glass
and the reel went into reverse.

Here the road rears
and father, setting spur
to twenty horse-power,
takes them up and over
thirty-five years,
off the edge of the map
crackling in mother's lap.

"Blue gates, the agent said—"
"We must have come too far."
"No. There they are."
And here is the house of the dead.
I want to stay in the car,
but not by myself under these
fluttering, muttering trees.

The lock unsealed, the door
gestures to the gloom
of corridor, corridor
and cavernous room.
Those terrible shapes!
Which dustsheet drapes
the horror in the tomb?

A soft crash, another,
as mother throws
those curtains right
and left. Light strikes
the wall like a gong,
filling the veins
of the house with song.

"If we lived here
on this hill, we might
have the wind's ear
and the sun's sight."
Down there, in the valley
flooded now with night,
bubbles the sunk city,

but here—where am I? I'm
listening to the chime
of milk-bottles, a trilling
kettle, someone singing
arias that make
dust-sheets dissolve. And I take
the stairs two at a time.

She opens doors and windows, lets
the world in. Plumage
and piano eat
from her hand, and when she plays,
the wind forgets
to turn her page,
the sun stretches out at her feet.

And in the evening, as the fire
is purring, Casals playing,
and coffee arcs from the spout,
she tells us; saying
"The x-rays leave no doubt,
but do not grieve." The fire
burns lower, lower, out.

And night brought round the day
when hedges were in bloom
and we brought down a vision
fire would not consume—
the milk van making way
for her; the blackthorn, shaken,
scattering its spray.

Jon Stallworthy

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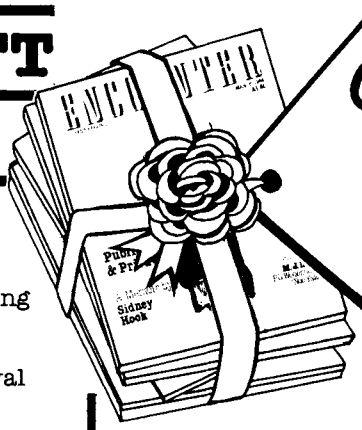

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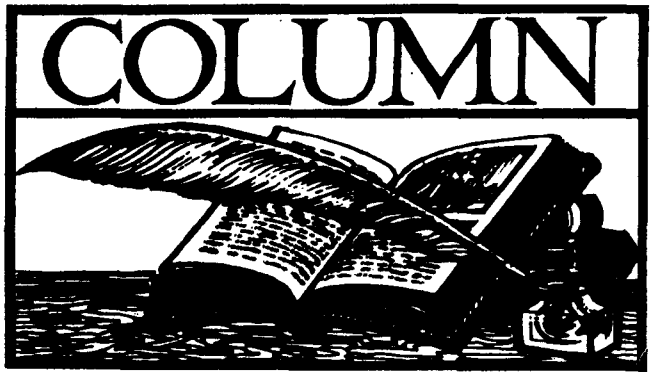

JACQUES TATI—François Truffaut—President Mitterrand: three faces of the *mésentente cordiale*.

Presidents take precedence; so let's begin with François Mitterrand. When he visited Britain in October 1984, he was variously misunderstood. The most obvious incomprehension was linguistic: addressed in French without an interpreter, British MPs were taken aback. In analogous circumstances, the *Assemblée nationale* would have been equally lost. But linguistic barriers are only part of the problem. To many Britons, Mitterrand himself is an enigma—like his fellow-citizens.

As long ago as 1957, lunching in London with a well-informed francophile, I ventured to guess that Mitterrand might one day become President. The idea was ridiculed—quite properly, on the evidence available. At that time, Mitterrand seemed an outsider, perhaps an opportunist. Later, as joint candidate of the Left against General de Gaulle in the presidential election of 1965, he looked saturnine and uneasy, as if tainted by reliance on Communist votes. It took time to reveal his strength and perseverance; and it took the publication of his notebooks to show the public how thoughtful and civilised he was. Elected at last in 1981 on a wave of liberationist euphoria, he faced the classic dilemma: how to reconcile campaign rhetoric with government responsibility. Encumbered by hopeful promises, he had to vindicate thrift by practising prodigality, then mending his ways. No wonder he became unpopular. The Right opposed his Socialism: his U-turn angered the Left. By the time he visited Britain, he was more beleaguered than Mrs Thatcher, defying the coal strike, the IRA, and the "wets." To one fretful commentator, Mitterrand and his hostess looked like founder-members of *le club des sans-club*.

Nevertheless, they differed—notably about the real club their countries both belong to: the European Community. As Mitterrand himself put it, Britain and France do not have "the same conceptions of Europe."

The London *Times* took this to imply that France seeks European "union", while Britain is content with "unity." "Union", in this context, is held to mean the gradual merging of political sovereignty—an open-ended commitment which could involve joint citizenship or statehood. "Unity", by contrast, can mean anything or almost nothing—limited, loose cooperation for specified material ends.

To a veteran of kindred debates on the continent in the 1950s, it all sounded wearily familiar. Not only because the whole controversy is thirty years old: but also, and especially, because it was academic even then. No serious statesman ever envisaged a "supranational" Government of Europe. That notion, seductive or repellent, was always either a Will-o'-the-wisp or a scarecrow. We can't, of course, tie the hands of our great-grandchildren and rule it out altogether; but we shouldn't let it distract us from taking practical decisions. Thirty years ago, the rhetoric of supranationality helped to discredit the sensible plan for a European army. Today, high-flown debates about ultimate objectives would likewise delay a joint European approach to job creation, new technology, foreign policy, security, and arms control. These urgent problems don't demand a "European Government." But they certainly require more than free-wheeling, minimalist, unstructured intergovernmental cooperation—the sort of thing that seemed adequate, to some people, in the days of OEEC, the Festival of Britain, and skiffle. If, for the present, Europe needs less than "union", it surely needs more than "unity."

How much more, and what? These are the real points at issue between Britain and France. How should Europe's farm policy be altered? How much protection, if any, does industry need? How should the "common market" be completed? How should service industries be governed—by themselves, or by the State? How should joint technology be promoted—by pressure, by mergers, or by cash?

ALL THESE ARE GENUINE, explicit disagreements; yet, underlying most of them, there are more occult Franco-British differences. The essential features of the *mésentente cordiale*, in fact, are not economic and political, but psychological and cultural.

I don't mean by this that Racine and Shakespeare are national sentinels keeping the British and French apart—although some anglophones are put off by alexandrines, and André Gide thought *King Lear* "absurd." The important cultural divergences are national habits of thought and feeling, conditioned by history, often embedded in language, and still subtly influencing even cosmopolitan sophisticates.

By now, we've all learned to be wary of national stereotypes. "A Frenchman must always be talking", grumbled Dr Johnson. "The English are incapable of enjoying conversation", retorted Hippolyte Taine. We may just catch ourselves agreeing with either statement; but for the most part we demur. We likewise smile condescendingly at tit-for-tat idioms like "*filer à l'anglaise*" and "to take French leave." From the armchair, or the study, these ancient foibles look quaint. In the newsroom or the negotiating chamber they haunt us still.

One obvious example is Britain's long battle over her share of the Community budget. In the early days, at least, British demands for "a fair deal" looked to the French like illegitimate attempts to secure "*juste retour*"—getting back from the budget roughly what one pays in, and thereby making it pointless to have a budget at all. To the British, conversely, French insistence on legality smacked of "legalism", Shylockian eagerness for one's pound of flesh—whereas, to any Frenchman, respect for the law is the guarantee of liberty. Perhaps Britain's negotiators should have read Montesquieu.

Divergent assumptions also affect national attitudes to the service industries. The British, who regard law as a safety-net,

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legislation as a last resort, and litigation as expensive folly, would prefer to see banking, stockbroking, insurance, and accountancy ruled in Europe by codes of conduct, as in Britain's self-governing professions. This concept tends to alarm the French. Unhappy without a *règlement* enforceable in the courts, they fear becoming enmeshed in a network of Anglo-Saxon gentlemen's agreements, a respectable jungle full of hypocrites and cheats. Perhaps their negotiators should read Trollope. Perhaps they have.

But it's Europe's farm policy that arouses the most atavistic prejudice. Ever since the repeal of the Corn Laws, Britain has seen herself as an industrial nation enjoying cheap food from overseas. France has a different self-image. Scratch a Parisian, and you'll find a Breton, an Auvergnat, a Périgourdin, or some other exile from his local *terroir*. Most Frenchmen regard their country as basically rural, with her true wealth in her soil. French disdain for British cooking, and British reverence for pseudo-French menus, are two sides of the same smooth-worn coin. Although Britain now produces 70% of her own food, and France now has fewer than 9% of her workforce on the land, the stereotypes of yesteryear remain powerful. Perhaps the negotiators on both sides of the Channel should read statistics.

THEY COULD CERTAINLY USE some kind of handbook to guide them round sensitive regions of the subconscious, from fisheries to religion. How much are we conditioned by songs like *The Fishermen of England* and *Frère Jacques*? As yet, no one can tell us; but psychologists and sociolinguists have begun to nibble at the problem. One piece of research which recently came my way is an unpublished study entitled *L'Angleterre face à la France: insulaire ou communautaire?* Its authors are Christian Bachmann and Annie Cohen-Solal, who's at present working on a biography of Jean-Paul Sartre.

As this fact might suggest, the study sometimes recalls the worst excesses of The Master. "*Notre choix méthodologique implique la mise en avant d'un cadre d'interprétation interactionnel.*" I *think* this means that the authors aren't looking at France or Britain in isolation, but at both countries as they interact. More *mésentente cordiale*? I hope not. Once past their scholastic overture, the authors soon get on with the plot.

What they've done, essentially, is to analyse two separate Franco-British confrontations, as reflected in the French and British press. One was a "summit" meeting of the European Community; the other, a Rugby football match at Twickenham.

The press reports on the "summit" confirm expected presuppositions. "In France, Europe is highlighted; in Britain, Britain." Out of some thirty headlines on either side of the Channel, 86% in France feature Europe, against 24% in Britain. The proportion of "national" references is 76% in Britain, but only 14% in France. This is partly, the authors suggest, because French journalists implicitly identify France's interests with those of the Community—perhaps, one might add, at the prompting of official spokesmen. On the far side of the Channel, "When they speak of Europe, the British lose their phlegm." The vocabulary of the headlines becomes warlike: "It invokes combat ('attack', 'break'), treason ('cheat', 'betrayed'), or menace ('accuse', 'warn', 'threat')." Mrs Thatcher appears as "a sort of martyr thrown into the lions' den"—"a woman of dignity, silent and proud in the face of the coalition against her . . . fulfilling the role of mute victim, heroine, and saint."

For the French press, on the other hand, "British intransigence blocks any negotiation": Mrs Thatcher is lampooned as "an untamed shrew." Only two French newspapers, *Le Matin* and *Le Monde*, trouble to mention that Britain has a different version of events; and even they seem to imply that the British press shares French journalists' views. The latter, as the authors point out, "pay no heed at all to British perceptions": "a strange world is built before the reader's eyes."

> "How is it that the most lucid and acerbic critics of Government policy in France suddenly grow credulous when they write about Britain or Margaret Thatcher? . . .
>
> Since French journalists make not the slightest effort to understand British points of view, it is no surprise that one simple idea eclipses all analysis: that the British are troublesome bedfellows. That, without a doubt, is the conclusion the average Frenchman comes to, on hasty reading of the press. Calm, naive anglophobia pervades the columns of the national dailies."

Irritated Francophobia is of course the Fleet Street counterpart. A sophisticated friend of mine, who normally wrote for *The Economist*, once agreed to pinch-hit for the Brussels correspondent of a British popular paper. She asked a colleague how she should handle the unaccustomed assignment. "That's easy", he answered. "Just start your story: 'France got tough with Britain today.' "

TWICKENHAM WAS subtly different. As the authors admit, Rugby may one day lose its nationalistic flavour. It might even become as cosmopolitan as tennis, whose individual stars attract a multinational following. But that hasn't happened yet; and the match in question, on 21 March 1981, was ardently followed by the French. France had already beaten Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Now, against England, she was going for the grand slam. The prose of the French sports-writers did more than justice to the occasion. The aim, they declared, was to "take power at Twickenham, conquer the impregnable citadel, invade Rugby's holy of holies, desecrate the British sanctuary"—almost, make off with the Holy Grail. The Arthurian imagery was backed by potted history, explaining to French readers how Rugby had begun, how France had adopted it, suggesting that Gallic dash and brio might snatch victory from the proud custodians of *le fair-play*.

To the British, all that would have seemed overblown. The authors of the study record with some wonderment the matter-of-fact tone of British reporting.

> "At Christmas, the annual review of the year's key matches is conducted with immense calm. . . . And when the television viewer prepares to watch this match in the excitement

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of Twickenham, there are no historic, mythological, aristocratic, royal, or charismatic overtones."

At worst, "the sense of superiority quietly affirmed by some British newspapers is not devoid of paternalism." When France wins, the authors detect ambivalence in British congratulations. "To praise one's victorious opponent is the subtlest way of praising oneself." The French, for their part, are happy to have lived out the "Astérix" myth—in British terms, to have been the nimble Drake who singed the King of Spain's beard. The England team, to the French press, had seemed "worthy", "naive", "lacking imagination." John Bull, once again, had been outsmarted by Marianne.

So the clichés proliferate. In his wayward study of *The French*, Theodore Zeldin concludes that Frenchmen are "becoming more and more different from each other."[1] That's hard to contest. Collectively, however, they still remain different from the British, sometimes in unexpected ways. One instance is their response to a less than professional player of Rugby football, the late Jacques Tati.

To me, and I'm sure to millions, Tati was unforgettable. A great comedian, he used to say, spoke with his legs. That walk of his, storklike, bouncing, ever optimistic, swivelling, switching direction as at railway points, brought up short by the untoward, advancing with precarious caution, discovered, turning aside in feigned nonchalance, large feet and loud socks protruding from hoisted trousers—it was a *leitmotif* to his films. But he was more than a clown. Every picture points a moral, celebrating untidiness, patience, fellow-feeling, the great fraternity of the inefficient. Against the high-tech utopias of the experts he set the *vieux quartier* of *Mon oncle*. Against the package tour he revived *Les vacances de Monsieur Hulot*. Against the tyranny of the zoom, the close-up, and manipulative editing, he upheld the democracy of placid medium- and long-shots, in which we're free to seek out a score of unobtrusive jokes.

Not all his films were as joyous as *Les vacances*. *Mon oncle* was a touch repetitive, *Playtime* long and sombre, *Trafic* uneven. Myself, I was never bowled over by *Jour de fête*. But what I found so appealing in all of them was "*une certaine idée de la France*"—anarchic, *artisanal*, anachronistic—very different from the *grandeur* preached by General de Gaulle. Mine, of course, was a typical foreigner's viewpoint; and, as Dr James Harding reminds us in his genial biography of Tati,[2] not all Frenchmen agreed. Tati, born Tatischeff, came of an exiled Russian family. "His" France was as idiosyncratic as the "England" of André Maurois's *Colonel Bramble* or Pierre Daninos's *Major Thompson*. When I lived in a fairly picturesque French village, it was hard to find picture-postcards of anything but the new municipal swimming-pool. Too many Frenchmen were busy "embracing their century." Only a minority saw it through Jacques Tati's sharp, nostalgic eyes.

One who did was the late François Truffaut; and he, too, was perceived differently on either side of the Channel. He found *Mon oncle* over-insistent in its burlesque of modernism, but "truly successful" with the *vieux quartier*, the market, and the children. Truffaut's handling of children was equally delicate, from *Les mistons*, *Les quatre cents coups*, and *Argent de poche* to even the didacticism of *L'enfant sauvage*. Over some of his other films, the French and the British tended to differ. *Jules et Jim*, with its Franco-German theme, struck chords in France unawakened in Britain; so did *L'histoire d'Adèle H.* Many Frenchmen responded more than I did to the *boulevardier* glitter of the "Antoine Doinel" sequels to *Les quatre cents coups* and to the amorism of *L'homme qui aimait les femmes*. Those who remembered the Occupation were troubled, on the other hand, by the artificial tone of *Le dernier métro*, which some of my British friends enjoyed. Hard-line British avant-gardists and admirers of Jean-Luc Godard, finally, tended to dismiss Truffaut as a peddler of spurious Gallic charm.

Time will tell. I'll go on mourning Truffaut as the heir of Jean Renoir. But even Renoir's France, to which Tati, Truffaut, and Mitterrand all pay tribute, can never be quite, to the visitor, what it is to *enfants de la Patrie*.

M

[1] *The French*. By Theodore Zeldin. Collins, £12.95.
[2] *Jacques Tati*. By James Harding. Secker & Warburg, £12.95.

The Life to Come

Walls like royal icing, and all the spirits
swathed in veils, like brides, and dreaming, almost,
in a white light reflected from the surfaces—
the marbled lids, the chips of fluorite.

It is a formal, ornamental place
with plaster doves, on vines, encased in glass,
stone flowers as elegant as lilies
and dazzling alabaster effigies.

And yet the spirits are not happy here.
Their sighing is so thin and spectral
that it can't be heard exactly, but I think
they feel neglected in eternity,

forever waiting for the life to come,
like chrysalises in a frosty season
who have forgotten what they were and do not
know what new shape may emerge from their old skin.

Sylvia Kantaris

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Glen Cavaliero

The Christmas Robins

Hullo again to all our friends! It's been an eventful year.
Simon has joined the firm at Guildford and started on a career.
Peter, who's doing V.S.O. (we tease him about the fleas!),
Somewhere inside West Africa spends Christmas overseas.
Rebecca's attending ballet class, which takes her out a good deal,
And plans to read Geography at Lancaster, Hull or Keele.
Young Also-Ran (Jamie, that is) has moved to another school
And is mad keen on water sports (just as well we have the pool!).
Elspeth's mother, *not* so fit, will move to a Home in May,
But Grandma Beecham flourishes and came with us to Carbis Bay.
And as for Elspeth, Bill says she's rewriting history's pages
By conducting an Extra-Mural class on The Later Middle Ages!
Our Bill himself keeps active in the armchair most of the day.
Poor Rosalie died. And so did the cat. There isn't much more to say,
So, love from us all to all of you, rest assured you're not forgot,
And we'll send you a bulletin next year also, whether you want one or not.

Once again a year's gone by, and still we have not met,
So to all of our friends here comes this screed to show you we don't forget.
It's been a very busy year, especially for dear Paul
Who was sent abroad by the army—we've hardly seen him at all.
Jill's done well at her riding (was presented to Princess Anne!)
While Jessamine Rose is growing up as fast as ever she can.
Elizabeth's father's strained his back, so has spent the year with us,
But Grandpa Burns had a cataract op with remarkably little fuss.
We took the car to Spain this year, right over the Pyrenees;
Even Jonathan's mother enjoyed the trip, and she's terribly hard to please!
Well, that's about all, folks, drop us a line, you know we'd love to send
A personal note (but you see how it is) to each and every friend,
So we hope this letter will keep you in touch. As we go to Geneva in June
And won't be back till November at least, we'll expect to hear from you soon.

Friends one and all, hullo there! We've had an *appalling* time.
Gavin copped out of his A levels and embarked on a course of crime.
Verity passed, with Honours, in Pornography at the Tech,
But then set to work on the life of a tart and is in it up to her neck.
Wee Dimity Joan had a sex change when she rounded seventeen,
And is "Jeremy John" and queer as a coot but still hasn't made the scene.
Veronica's mother got hooked on pot and arrested in Woburn Sands,
And Timothy's dad, having ruptured his truss, makes do with elastic bands.
Ed's business trip to Guyana turned out to be rather a frost,
And Ian was summonsed for battery after telling a bobby Get Lost,
Then crashing the car for the third time (pissed) was disqualified for a year—
But enough of all this! We send you our love. God bless. Look us up if you're near.

Dear Ted, another year gone, and each one like the other.
Easter I spent as usual with Dave and shall go to my married brother
For the umpteenth bloody Xmas. They don't have colour TV,
Only Joyce's sister, the Vicar to lunch, and a minimal view of the sea.
Life at the office is much the same, we enjoyed our day at Southend,
My right leg is worse, my headaches are better, can you tell me the name of Tom's friend
Who's keen on Shirley Bassey? These digs aren't so bad, though I fear
They'll be selling up soon, then where shall I go? There's nothing else suitable here.
Ah, well, not to worry. And write before long. I'm afraid I cannot see
Any point in hoping that this finds you as I find it leaving me.

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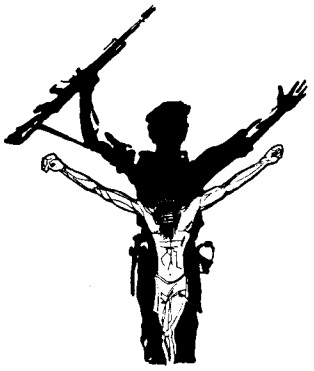
NOTES & TOPICS

Theology, Liberated?

By Alain Besançon



WHAT I FIND most immediately striking about the "Instruction on Some Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation' " concerns the intellectual quality of the document. Its reasonable, clear language and rather high level of argument carry the stamp of Cardinal Ratzinger, one of the more distinguished minds in the Roman Catholic Church. The purpose of the Instruction was to give a critique of a doctrine born within a section of the Latin American clergy, which flourishes under various guises and in various congregations, particularly in Brazil, and which has already begun to be applied in an authoritarian manner in Nicaragua under governmental tutelage. It is also intended to help Roman Catholics to realise what is at stake and to resist the seduction which "liberation theology" represents when it claims to be "purer" and "more truly Christian" than the old-fashioned Christianity they have been taught. Without pretending to exhaust the content of this intricate analysis, the following points seem to me the most salient.

(1) "The theology of liberation" claims to be based upon a scientific analysis of the economic, social and political situation. Now, "scientific", in the current sense of careful examination of facts and construction of partial, verifiable theories, it is not. What it calls "scientific" is Marxist (more precisely Marxist-Leninist) theory—in other words, a totalising system which usurps the name of science and refutes all objections by stuffing them into a pigeon-hole where their presence disqualifies them in advance. That's not science, but ideology. Furthermore, this ideology relativises the truth either according to its "class content" or through the practice of activists who contend that they are speaking in the name of their "class." The notion of truth, and hence of scientific truth, is therefore discarded.

(2) "The theology of liberation", in its ideological extension, has developed an allegorical interpretation of Christianity. God is identified with "History." Faith becomes "faith in History" (a credo for the militant revolutionary life). Hope becomes "trust in the Future", charity "opting for the poor", and so on. All this enables the theology to argue its essential orthodoxy. It is prepared to accept all the articles of the Creed, since these are interpreted in a way which has almost nothing to do with their commonly accepted meaning. Digging further, one unearths a Marxist conviction which has borrowed the language of traditional faith, although this process sometimes goes on unknown to the person concerned—who actually believes he is renewing his faith at the moment when he is discarding it.

(3) "The theology of liberation" localises evil in the vicious "structures" of the economic and social system. To root out evil therefore means changing the "structures" by revolutionary practice. The document reminds the reader that it is not structures which are just or unjust, but human beings: "As the fruit of the actions of men, good or bad structures are consequences rather than causes. The root of evil therefore lies in free and responsible people. . . ."

(4) "The theology of liberation" fosters a confusion between the traditional notion of "the Poor" and the Marxist notion of "the Proletariat." The concern for the poor which had existed in ancient moral systems became central in the religion of the Bible. But there it refers to an actual person with whom one has a natural social relationship, a "neighbour", not to an abstract ideological category. The biblical reason for "loving the poor" is the divine affection they enjoy, not their membership of a class which claims salvation within the framework of a secularised messianism. And love of the poor does not justify hatred for other social categories, since all men have equal rights to the same good will. The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is decidedly hard to circumvent, even for theologians sympathetic to guerrillas.

THE GREATER PART of the text is of special interest to Catholics. Nevertheless, an outside observer may reflect on the circumstances of its production. The origins of "the theology of liberation" go back, in France, to the 19th century and the humanitarian Christianity of Lamennais. It was only after the Second World War that Christian progressives began to borrow first the vocabulary and then the "analyses" of Marxist-Leninist ideology, and finally, unwittingly, allowed themselves to absorb it. For despite all claims to the contrary, the common basis of "liberation theologies" is certainly Communism with a dash of soul and of messianistic zeal. In Europe, the Roman Catholic world and even the clergy now seem to be conscious of the danger. But the disease has sprung up with added virulence in Latin America: a strategic continent, prey to innumerable difficulties, and one of the last regions in the world where the Catholic Church is politically influential. The Castroism of Che Guevara failed—but the self-same Castroism has succeeded in Managua, thanks to its transmission through the clergy.

I feel certain there will be an outcry that with this "Instruction" the Church is siding with the rich against the poor. It must be said, then, that "liberation theology"—like Communism in general—is a manifestation not of the rebellion of the poor, but of an intellectual manoeuvre practised upon the middle levels

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of the intelligentsia, of which the easily seduced clergy are a part. In criticising this "theology" the Vatican is attempting to protect the poor of Latin America, already overwhelmed by countless oppressions, from falling under that absolute oppression which dominates Cuba and will soon dominate Nicaragua. As for the historic struggle for justice, it is not compromised in the least. It is only effective, after all, when it knows what it is doing.

There is no saying whether this text will put an end to the latent conflict in the Catholic Church which has continued for decades, or whether it will see the outbreak of open warfare. It may be that in the future the "Instruction" will be considered a major document, alongside the two encyclicals published by Pope Pius XI in 1937 against Nazism and Communism. In those days, the totalitarian virus spread outside the Catholic Church. Today the Church must eradicate it from within.

A Memory of the Past

The Scene on the Old Left—By ARNOLD BEICHMAN

ONE OF THE SADDEST luncheons in my life occurred some time in the fall of 1967 at the Columbia University Faculty Club on New York City's Morningside Heights. After many years as a political journalist I had returned to Columbia where I had been a student in the Depression '30s. This time I enrolled to seek a doctorate in political science (which I subsequently obtained, in 1973). One of my fellow-students, like myself a kind of "retread", was Joseph Starobin, a one-time writer and editor of the *Daily Worker*. He had entered Columbia after a long career as a devoted Communist who had finally "broken" with the Party.

Although I had never met Starobin, I had disliked him from afar. At Columbia I had been editor of the student daily newspaper, the *Columbia Spectator*, and I had refused to go along with the persistent Communist Party line on war, peace, the infamous "social fascism" dogma, Stalin, the USSR . . . the lot.

Expelled from the municipally-run City College of New York in 1931, Starobin was at the time editing a city-wide Communist student newspaper in which I recall he usually referred to me, in the agit-prop rhetoric of the day, as "Arnold Beichman and his red-baiting *Columbia Spectator*." In later years, I was a reporter and then an editor of the newspaper "*PM*", a highbrow left-liberal New York daily of the 1940s, long defunct. Starobin was by now a *Daily Worker* staffer. He frequently attacked James Wechsler, Harold Lavine (also *PM* editors) and myself as a sort of unholy trio of Soviet-haters, which we undoubtedly were.

After Stalin's death in 1953 and the 1956 Hungarian uprising, Starobin and another CP official, John Gates, defected from the CP after a membership of almost a quarter-of-a-century. Some years later, after receiving his Columbia doctorate, Starobin turned out a rather good and detailed study of the CP-USA published under the title *American Communism in Crisis: 1943-1957* (Harvard University Press, 1972). He went on to teach at York University in Canada; he died in 1976.

But one day, ten years earlier, we ran into each other in the office of Professor Wallace Sayre, a genial, iconoclastic professor of political science. Although Starobin and I had never met, he greeted me with a pressing enthusiasm, or so it seemed to me. He insisted we "must lunch one day soon"; he wanted to talk to me. I was still stiff with hostility and murmured about being busy working on my dissertation. Eventually we did meet.

It was a melancholy occasion. All we talked about was what had happened to about a dozen Columbia students we both had known in the 1930s who became open, professional Communists—one an organiser in the midwestern US for a Communist front (the "Farm Holiday Association"); another a *Daily Worker* Washington correspondent; another a labour official in a Communist-controlled trade union; still another an attaché of the Party's Central Committee; and on and on, like an alumni association secretary at a college reunion. And what were they doing now?

Starobin knew all about them. After two disastrous marriages, *A.* had left the Party, and was now running a small furniture factory outside Philadelphia. *B.* had left the Party quietly; he was managing a filling station in upstate New York. *C.* had gone down to South America. To do what? Starobin said it had something to do with anthropology; who knows? Anyway, *C.* had disappeared. I thought of the despairing lines from *Cymbeline*:

> *Golden lads and girls all must,*
> *As chimney-sweepers, come to dust. . . .*

And how about *D.*, a handsome, dashing, blond six-footer from Minnesota, a fraternity enthusiast who in his last year joined the "Social Problems Club" (the *nom de guerre* of the campus Communist cell)? Starobin shook his head and said, "I don't even want to talk about what he's doing—it's so awful." Nothing I could say persuaded him to tell me about this one-time Columbia classmate. I remember a few years after graduation running into James C. Hagerty, a Columbia classmate who later became President Eisenhower's press secretary. At that time in 1936, he was a political reporter for the *New York Times*. Hagerty told me that covering the

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Communist Party convention at the old Madison Square Garden was almost like a Columbia fraternity reunion, since some of the delegates, including the blond Minnesotan, were fellow *Dekes* (short for *Delta Kappa Epsilon*, the name of the fraternity).

THE LUNCH WENT ON a little longer. Starobin told me of his experiences as the *Worker* correspondent in Moscow when, to his astonishment, he found that the Russians treated him as if he were an enemy. Western correspondents were sought after, cosseted, kept informed by Soviet press officials about Soviet policy while he, a CP member—and the Party's *Daily Worker* correspondent at that!—was shunned by his Russian comrades. Had it not been for the generosity of the Western correspondents, he'd have had nothing to cable to his readers back home other than *Pravda* or *Izvestia* rewrites. It was disillusioning for Starobin to find himself under perpetual suspicion—in Moscow!

All I could think of as Starobin talked and talked was what a waste of precious youth, of precious talent, to have given away those precious years—willingly—in the service of political idolatry and harlotry. I knew most of the Communist undergraduates at Columbia. Often they hounded me when I was campus editor with their protest delegations, but we managed to get along. Some I even rather liked. As Starobin related their story, I kept thinking of the awful failure of those, like Starobin, who believed in Communism and who, having given away so much of their best days, had at the end nothing, but nothing, to show for it. Of course, these campus Communists were far more fortunate than those who found themselves in Nazi Germany, or those European Communists who were wiped out during the Stalin purges, or executed in Spain during the 1937-39 civil war.

THIS MEMORY CAME TO ME as I read Harvey Klehr's fine history about the heady days of the CP-USA.[1] Most of the names were familiar to me. On *PM* I had covered labour and CP affairs so that I knew some of them personally, including one Party official, Donald Henderson (he had been my economics instructor at Columbia during my second year). He was supposed to teach a course called "International Economics" but he cleverly turned it into a hymn of joy to Soviet Five-Year Plans. I dropped the course after two weeks during which I heard six lectures on "*Piatiletka*" (the Russian, I believe, for the Five Year Plan). Henderson was later fired from the faculty and his dismissal became a burning issue of "academic freedom" at the time. I found it difficult to defend him and therefore declined to support the campus demonstrations on his behalf although I did accept the probability that some standard of academic

[1] *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade.* By HARVEY KLEHR. Basic Books, $27.00, £25.00. Professor Klehr is also the author of an important but neglected earlier work, *Communist Cadre: The Social Background of the American Party Elite* (Hoover Institution Press, 1978).

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freedom had been violated by his dismissal. All this time, Henderson was a member of the CP and when I met him later at a Party convention I discovered he was proudly wearing the badge of a member of the Party's Central Committee.

Some of them, like Starobin and Henderson, were or could have been what we nicely call nice persons. But staying in the CP and covering up for so long those awful, inhuman years of the Stalin dictatorship did something to them. I suppose what kept them going for so long was a belief that the 1930s depression heralded the proletarian revolution according to the laws of Marx, Lenin and Stalin.

The depression coincided with what Stalin declared to be the "Third Period", defined by the Comintern as that period of late capitalism during which its crisis would be intensified—"class against class"—because of the concomitant uncontainable contradictions of imperialism, the highest (and last) stage of capitalism, a kind of gibberish which seduced many young minds and, I am afraid, still does. It did look hopeful for "revolution", especially so since at Franklin Roosevelt's election in 1932 unemployment in the US stood at 24%, and it was still quite high in 1938—20%. (It was World War II which brought down unemployment so that by 1944 it was virtually non-existent. So much for the New Deal achievements in reducing unemployment.)

Today the Communist Party is a minor political phenomenon with little significance on the politics of the day compared to its influence, say, in 1944 when President Roosevelt sent one of his executive assistants, David K. Niles, to ask Earl Browder (the CP leader), not to endorse FDR for re-election publicly because of the boomerang risks. One used to read Communist publications for no other reason except that there might be a clue to Soviet policy intentions somewhere. Such clues are today rarely to be found. It was once estimated, tongue-in-cheek, in the days when it was called the *Daily Worker* (now the *Daily World*) that just about half of its small circulation were hostile readers—intelligence agencies, urban police, anti-Communist trade-union officials, anti-Stalinist intellectuals, Federal government departments and so on, those who had a need to know "what the other side was up to."

Few American intellectuals, skilled or semi-skilled, are now part of the Communist Party apparatus except for someone like Angela Davis. I see that she was running for Vice-President along with an amiable non-entity, Gus Hall, for President. In a sense nobody much cares what a satellite party of the USSR thinks on anything. Before World War II the CP (as Klehr shows) had an intellectual base—figures like Granville Hicks, Joseph Freeman, Richard Rovere, Theodore Draper, Josephine Herbst, Freda Utley and many, many others. It would be inconceivable today for any leading intellectual openly to join the CP. There are no longer many open "fellow-travellers" like those who in the CP hey-day could always be depended upon to support some CP policy statement or to sign some pro-Soviet attack on the USA.

Supporters of the USSR and its foreign policies can speak with far more authority today precisely because no one can point a finger at any one of them and say that he's a Party member or fellow-traveller. Many of them support the Kremlin as "Marxists." In fact, Marxism is the neo-Communism of the 1980s. Since the other name for Marxism is "scientific socialism", it is no fighting phrase as the word "Communism" is. I can foresee a day when Harvey Klehr may write a book called *The Heyday of American Marxism, 1970-1984*. It would describe how Marxism, as a self-contained "social science" taught by a Marxist professoriat, became entrenched in American universities at precisely the same time that Marxism had been disowned among European intellectuals, especially in Paris, which had once been Marxism's world capital in the non-Communist world.

BUT THAT IS still for "the future" for historians. Professor Klehr has put his finger on the root cause of the CP failure in America as elsewhere. Because the CP-USA leadership and its followers believed in "proletarian internationalism"—everything, including treason to one's native land, was permissible in the interests of Communism and the USSR—the Party had to move in any direction dictated by Moscow.

"Proletarian internationalism" was but one of many CP errors which led to the decline of the Party in the US, except that from the Kremlin's standpoint these were not "errors" but policies quite in keeping with Lenin's teaching. The epigraph in Lenin's preface in *What Is To Be Done?* is a letter by Lassalle to Marx in 1852 which reads:

> ". . . Party struggles lend a party strength and vitality; the greatest proof of a party's weakness is its diffuseness and the blurring of clear demarcations; *a party becomes stronger by purging itself.*" (emphasis added)

Klehr points out that the American Communist movement was born in anticipation of a Workers Revolution. Few Communists or their supporters thought to ask as the great German sociologist, Werner Sombart, had asked at the turn of the century, "Why is there no socialism in the United States?" Had they sought an answer to that question there might have been a greater sense of realism about the prospects for "proletarian revolution" in the generally prospering industrial societies of capitalist democracies. But CP leaders and followers were trained not only to accept answers from far away but to relish and enjoy those answers because by so doing they would be part of the "dialectical process", the new history-in-the-making. And the organisational key to victory, as they saw it, was "democratic centralism", the Leninist euphemism for legitimating the party dictatorship.

In any case there was no revolution; it wasn't even close. What interest there is today in the CP-USA is to be found among scholar-antiquarians like Klehr, who deserve our thanks for bringing us this sad, bizarre history of a small group of Americans who thought that the world could be made a better place by following the dictates of exotic and flawed revolutionary spirits like Lenin, Stalin or Trotsky. It turned out that for so many of the Party members the "bourgeois" morality which they reprobated had real personal meaning—for had they lived in Stalin's USSR or in Eastern Europe, they would have perished in some Siberian wasteland. It was only an accident of geography, Max Schachtman once pointed out (in a stormy debate with the purged but still unrepentant

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Earl Browder), that men like Browder had happily survived—but after decades of servility to Stalin he had been unceremoniously expelled from the Party overnight at the end of World War II—and for years after still protested his loyalty to the dictator in the Kremlin.

One would like to persuade all those young left-liberals who have been romanticising one of the blackest periods in contemporary US intellectual history to read Professor Klehr's books and see for themselves, through the overwhelming and massive documentation which Klehr supplies, what inhuman doctrines their present culture-heroes once worshipped. Perhaps it might be even more useful if all those pro-Marxist assistant and associate professors who are preaching Marxist nostrums as the "higher learning" in American universities would incorporate on their assigned reading-lists Professor Klehr's synoptic history of the CP-USA. But that, I am afraid, would be stretching their standards of "academic freedom" too far.

Paris Notebook

By Jean-François Revel

Lying Through One's Teeth

WILL IT BE one of the virtues of the year "1984" to demonstrate that in politics the effectiveness of the lie is in decline? "Machiavellianism" was born in an age when "public opinion" was composed mainly of illiterates. Now the least attentive of our citizens can recall one or two (or three) pieces of information that enable him to compare yesterday's statements with today's, the word with the deed, the promise with the achievement.

All the chicanery of last summer did not prevent 69% of the French people from disapproving of the way their country is being governed (BVA-*Paris Match* poll, 28 September)—or improve the President's popularity rating. The rating for the new Prime Minister reflects an initial prejudice in favour, a sign that citizens will judge according to the evidence and harbour no preconceived hostility. But how revealing it is that Laurent Fabius should have felt called upon to inaugurate his prime-ministerial stint by swearing "never to lie" to the people! Whose bad example did he intend to avoid?

There was a time when any one who called for "sincerity" in politics was accused of being naive. Politicians, it was generally agreed, did not come within the scope of the laws on false advertising which threaten the humblest sausage-maker. And this immunity, it was argued, did not violate morality, because it stemmed from the very necessities of political life. In order to act, one has to persuade, especially in a democracy. In order to persuade, one must be free not to tell the precise truth, if one was leading fellow citizens along a path they would ultimately be glad that they took.

Any number of historical cases supported this classic theory, of course. But the theory no longer appears to accord with the most recent responses of public opinion. The pretext of effectiveness crumbles when the dutiful deceiver no longer really manages to deceive. A SOFRES poll which appeared in *Le Monde* (6 September) revealed that 82% of the French people believe that politicians do not tell the truth. Another SOFRES poll (in *Le Point*, 17 September) informed us that when asked to indicate which man—Jacques Chirac, Giscard d'Estaing or Raymond Barre—says that he thinks with the greatest sincerity, the French awarded Raymond Barre the gold medal for candour with . . . 19%. In other words, the man deemed the most honest was considered unreliable, *de mauvaise foi*, by 81% of the nation. The particular French politician who most despises all other politicians was himself found trustworthy by less than one-fifth of his fellow-citizens!

These discreditable findings cannot be interpreted merely as the reflection of public apathy about politics: what the polls show is a distrust of particular men and of the words they use. A country becomes depoliticised when it believes it can no longer influence its rulers' decisions or alter the course of public affairs. But that is not what we are seeing at present. How can anyone stamp the year 1984 with the slogan *à quoi bon?*, "What's the point?", when in France it saw the withdrawal of the new School Law under the pressure of public opinion, and in Canada the most thorough electoral shift in the last quarter-of-a-century? Similarly, reversing a long-established attitude, the recent Congress of the Swedish Socialist Party voted in favour of a motion to increase military expenditure: no suggestion there that the Swedes took no interest in their future. On the contrary, the vote proves that they spoke out very plainly about two opposing "credibilities"—the Soviet submarines infesting their territorial waters, and the "partisans of peace" calling for unilateral disarmament.

POLITICAL LYING, *le mensonge politique,* is a technical, professional matter; it does not tarnish the personal and private honour of its exponent any more than a stage role condemns the actor. That must be borne clearly in mind in the case of the examples I am about to cite. I confine myself to observing that any profit from the lie is diminishing, and the decline of the French Communist Party provides the most convincing illustration.

It is no secret that the Leninist tradition advises massive use of the most fantastic untruths. For a long time, public ignorance allowed this method an appreciable success. But the public is now much better informed, and belief in lies about "real socialism" or "democratic centralism" has correspondingly declined.

Since the appearance in 1977 of Georges Marchais' book

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Parlons franchement (whose lack of frankness began with its title), we know that the French CP has lost half its electorate. Has it altered its style of communication with the public? Not at all; and here lies the paradox. Lying no longer pays dividends, or produces the goods. This will comfort all democrats, but politicians seem to be the only ones not to have noticed. When Comrade Krasucki denies that the French Communist Party has any influence on the *Confédération Générale de Travail*, he is acting out a familiar routine. The mystery is that he goes on performing when he ought to be perfectly well aware that no one believes him any longer (a fact verified, among other things, by the fall of many of his supporters). Similarly, did Marcel Rigout imagine that he was shoring up the CP's lost repute when he summoned up the breathtaking confidence to aver (after the last meeting of the Central Committee) that "there is no split in the *union de la gauche*", that this was "a misinterpretation of the words of Georges Marchais"?

A few socialists are attempting to follow this optimistic path and persuade themselves that the *union de la gauche* has "never been so good" (*Le Monde*, 13 and 14 September). They share this vision with a famous precursor: it was Léon Blum who wrote (in *Le Populaire* of 6 May 1947), after the split between the Communists and the government of the Socialist Ramadier, that the *démission d'office* of the Communist Ministers had no political cause and would entail no political consequences. In fact, this inaugurated almost twenty years of hostilities between the two parties of the Left.

It is no longer the public who are naive—they are entertained rather than offended by these enormities. Now it is the "actors", who are ingenuous enough to imagine they can still get away with using such antiquated methods. How can the Presidential aspirants in the current Opposition fail to realise that the French see their bickering (about the referendum, dissolution, denationalisation, the socialist "new look", or the possibility of a "*reaganisme à la française*") merely as one speaker attempting to single himself out from his rivals, and not as a genuine debate about essentials? Perhaps that is a little unjust, but it gives the right idea.

IN POLITICS, the worst effect of this art of mythology undoubtedly arises out of the occasional need for a leadership or party to advocate a policy totally at odds with their basic ideas. The reader will recognise the situation as that of the French Socialist Party today. When Jean Poperen claims that the Party "has always been unashamedly social-democratic", his audience smiles, remembering ten years of socialist literature about "*le front de classe*" and "*la rupture avec le capitalisme*." Soon—who knows?—we may see M. Chevènement accusing Michel Rocard of extremism. When a journalist asks Lionel Jospin: "What, in your view, is the future of socialism?" and he answers: "Attending the meeting of the Socialist International in Tanzania to protest against apartheid . . ." the sidestep is so obvious that no one can be fooled. *Libération* wrote about the umpteenth anti-unemployment plan: "What a talent Fabius has for giving a new look to dusty old back-of-the-shop goods!" But where's the talent when it's all so glaringly obvious? It's not a question of whether the socialists are right or wrong to change their policy. (They are probably right.) It's a matter of seeing that they defend this change with such patently clumsy verbal hocus-pocus that the citizens' scepticism can only increase.

It is normal to leave the Prime Minister time to put his policy into practice before judging it, and abnormal to overlook any flagrant contradictions. The first contradiction is that between words and deeds—at least between the old doctrine and the new programme. How surprising to see the socialists getting rid of the Minimum Wage in such a roundabout way, and suddenly declaring that anything that makes the labour market more flexible will create more jobs! Certainly it is praiseworthy to be able to change a doctrine once it is perceived to be false. But there are U-turns so sweeping that the public cannot understand them solely with the aid of a few avuncular evasions.

Imagine Ronald Reagan imposing collectivisation and a *kolkhoz* system on American farmers, and then informing them that he was simply departing slightly from his original agrarian line! Even *kolkhoz* supporters would have little esteem for his intellectual probity. Today, in France, a socialist political class is having to adopt a liberal economic practice. We are riding a wave of schizophrenia. As Laurent Joffrin puts it: "The Left in power was supposed to break with capitalism—it has broken with socialism. . . ." It will take more than the trotting-out of tired evasions to restore trust between the people and their government.

A SECOND CONTRADICTION arises from the incompatibility of the present programme with the State and the social structures created by its predecessor, structures which can only be abolished by new laws. True, the French budget for 1985 indicates more liberal intentions, but what can ceaseless appeals to create new businesses and dynamise the private sector achieve, when the whole weight of the economic machine is *dirigiste*? Jacques Lesourne (an expert of international repute, a very moderate man, and no enemy of the Socialist Party) writes:

> "There is no longer any private industry in France. . . . All the features of a private regulatory system have now disappeared. If the smallest industrial enterprise has difficulties, the intervention of the public sector is necessary to solve its problems. . . .
>
> SOSes pile up on the desk of the Director-General for Industry."

Laurent Fabius is undeniably *un nouveau réaliste*, but a realism of words cannot become a realism of deeds if the system is not once more transformed. This contradiction between the logic of the system and the new intentions of the government leads ineluctably towards a sibylline rhetoric. But from now on, sincerity in politics is no longer a luxury—public disbelief is so entrenched that political veracity has become a national priority, a condition of our survival.

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A Special Book Section

History & Archaeology

Fiction as History

On an Earlier President—By Owen Dudley Edwards

Mr Gore Vidal's *Lincoln*,[1] is one of the literary events of our time. It is brilliant, moving, thoughtful. It has meditations of dignity and value on the human condition maintained with scientific relevance to its business of telling a story, and it should inspire such meditation on the part of others. It raises important questions about historical matters, and its quality invites any disagreement about its arguments and suggestions to prove itself likewise constructive.

The title is *Lincoln*, and the subtitle is "a Novel." I am a little uncertain about that subtitle. Mr Vidal is concerned to show how Lincoln appeared to a few persons during the time from his arrival at Washington, D.C., just before his inauguration, down to his assassination in 1865 four years later; there is a brief epilogue set in 1867 in Paris. The action is never shown through Lincoln's eyes, save at the moment of his famous dream about his assassination shortly before that event. Unlike his earlier historical works, *Burr* (1973) and *1876* (1976), in which Mr Vidal used the vehicle of an imaginary narrator describing the conduct of real people, Mr Vidal's *Lincoln* is written in the third person, but the action is viewed through the perceptions of actual historical figures: Lincoln's Secretary of State William H. Seward, his Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, his wife Mary Todd Lincoln, his secretary John Milton Hay, and the minor accomplice in his assassination David Herold. We also get fleeting glimpses through the eyes of minor characters such as Congressman Elihu B. Washburne.

Where my doubts about the classification creep in is that by this method the work is far more firmly anchored to fact than even the most generous frontiers of the novel customarily allow. Hitherto Mr Vidal has been to many pains to get his history right, or at least probable for the most part and possible for the rest. His *Burr* aroused great controversy, but this was because of the views of Washington, Jefferson and others put in the mouth of Burr. The portrait of Washington was bad; but Burr is unlikely to have produced a good one. The portrait of Jefferson was very hostile; but Burr's would have been very hostile, and Mr Vidal made the point that it was more hostile than his own. He relied heavily on the researches and knowledge of Dr Mary-Jo Kline, editor of the Burr papers; *1876*, about the disputed election of President Rutherford B. Hayes, drew on the advice of a great historical authority on that period, Professor Eric L. McKittrick. But in both cases the overall view was through the eyes of the imaginary Charles Schuyler, who had only a shadowy basis in reality for the first book and none at all for the second.

This time the only fictional treatment of a narrator-figure is in the case of David Herold. Little is known of the real Herold save that he seems to have been mentally deficient to a considerable degree. Mr Vidal keeps him on this side of human rationality, and paints a wholly credible if coldly pathetic study in self-delusion. The intended effect is clearly to show the squalid and contemptible character of the espionage and assassination conspiracies which finally took Lincoln's life, a healthy corrective for the romance which crept around the conspirators after their deaths. Mr Vidal's terms of reference will not even permit them their martyrdom; when Lincoln is dead, their interest for him is over. Herold is finally shown fleeing with his revered John Wilkes Booth, who has just murdered Lincoln. We do not see Booth's death—as to reality, it is unclear whether he was shot by the authorities who had surrounded his hide-out or, more likely, committed suicide—nor do we see the abject surrender of Herold which preceded that event. But both follow logically from our last vision of them.

Most of the Herold part of the work has to be fictional. There is a creepy relationship here with the narrative figure of Schuyler in the other books. Herold and Schuyler are unimportant men, who see a good deal of low life—and what a service Mr Vidal does for social history in his outstanding presentation of that, as well as showing great events and figures through the eye of that essential chief protagonist planted firmly in the historical novel by Sir Walter Scott, the marginal, highly impressionable, enthusiastic juvenile. (Schuyler is of course quite old by *1876*, but he still retains his youthful appeal to the reader.) Mr Vidal has written so well

[1] *Lincoln*. By Gore Vidal. Heinemann, £9.95; Random House, $19.95.

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about the explicitly sexual aspects of homosexuality that it is natural for him to exhibit masterly quality in the use of that standard, non-sexual homosexual relationship in literature, the youth through whom the reader sees the action and the older man who comes to dominate his horizon. Jim Hawkins and Long John Silver, David Balfour and Alan Breck, Tinker and Sexton Blake, Huckleberry Finn and Nigger Jim, Ginger and Biggles, practically the entire corpus of G. A. Henty, and, consciously drawing on the entire genre, Luke and Ben in the film *Star Wars*: Charlie Schuyler and Aaron Burr are a logical addition. (The ultimate discovery that they are son and father detracts nothing from this: the whole principle is one of surrogate paternity, satirised in *Star Wars* when the victim of the joint endeavours proves to be Luke's real father.) And now to these must be added David Herold and John Wilkes Booth.

THERE IS A VERY CLEVER TWIST on the structure of *Burr* here. The basic point about *Burr* was that Mr Vidal, sardonically amusing himself and his readers as the United States was gearing itself up to the big brouhaha of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, invited us to look at the unquestionably brilliant and more questionably sacrosanct Revolutionary generation through the eyes of the schoolroom villain of the period, Aaron Burr. Burr in the novel proves to be much less of a villain than had been assumed, as Dr Kline and others have since forced historians to realise. He was also more squalid and more pathetic than he appears in the novel, but, as Mr Vidal would remind us, it is Charlie Schuyler whose view we see there. Now, in his new book, Mr Vidal really shows us the squalor and pathos of a supposed hero—a pathos very much rhyming with bathos—reeking through the panegyrics of his admirer as David Herold is drawn inexorably into the role of disciple of John Wilkes Booth. At the same time, having said "this supposedly bad man is not bad: let me show him through the eyes of an independent observer who slowly discovers him", Mr Vidal is now saying exactly the converse by the same method. Burr's wickedness turns out to be comedy, realism and creation; Booth's is tragedy, delusion and destruction. Herold's journey towards the discovery of Booth is a long, inconclusive and almost mindless drifting before they finally meet, while Schuyler's Odyssey to the reality of Burr is a journey into the mind of a man he meets at the outset.

The contrast is significant: the Schuyler voyage is intellectual, the Herold progress is animal. But the method is the same, and even some of the means by which Herold possesses the mind of the reader are the same: the appeal of vulnerability, the need to see events through inexperienced eyes, and so forth. Dispassionate and sardonic Mr Vidal likes to appear, but he is no Evelyn Waugh wanting to torture his characters (he has indeed termed Waugh "unspeakable"), and there is a tenderness in his view of Schuyler, inside and outside the novels. There is almost a lump in the throat in the note following *1876* which ends with Charlie Schuyler's death: "by now Charlie seems very real to me." But David is very real too, and was, of course, much more real than Charlie. As Gerard Manley Hopkins observed, "Abel is Cain's brother and breasts they have sucked the same."

THE WHOLE DAVID HEROLD SUB-PLOT is away from Lincoln himself and can throw little light on Lincoln. But the other chief protagonists through whom we follow events are in almost daily association with the President. And here Mr Vidal is very rightly conscious of the constraints of historical reality. John Hay and Salmon P. Chase kept diaries and wrote many letters. Chase and Seward kept substantial collections of papers. And as we shall see, Mr Vidal had unrivalled opportunities for getting Mary Todd Lincoln right, and, I believe, got her fairly right. The result is that the fictional element is heavily imprisoned. The real Seward or Chase dictates what Mr Vidal can say much of the time. The real John Hay is a more wayward prison-warder. Hay wrote a great deal about Lincoln, including a ten-volume biography with his fellow-secretary John George Nicolay. But that was the product of mature years and intense respectabilisation; and while it is not possible to divide the work between its two authors, Hay's most obvious individual contribution seems to have been covering Lincoln's early life. Moreover, Mr Vidal rightly stresses that the two secretaries at the time were decidedly less reverent, if not less affectionate, towards their great chief than they appear in their *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (1890). And if, as Mr Vidal tells us, he has "invented a low-life" for David Herold, he has also ascribed a generously wide education to John Hay. The result is a figure who seems once again to have a little more in common with the fictional Charlie Schuyler than with the real John Hay, and certainly suggests a much more likeable figure than the future diplomat, élitist journalist, self-conscious man of letters, Anglophile Ambassador, and Secretary of State.

But the high politics of the thing rest with Chase and Seward, and if Mr Vidal had chosen to pepper his text with footnotes the results would leave us sneezing very violently. The same is if anything even more true of the passages through the eyes of Mary Todd Lincoln, on whom the author has evidently combed a myriad of sources under the most expert of all professional guidance.

That these results are part of a very conscious decision may be seen by the fact that the third noteworthy member of Lincoln's Cabinet, his second Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, is very visibly present through much of the action but we do not see it through his eyes. There is an excellent reason for this, from an historian's standpoint. Stanton is an even more mysterious figure than Lincoln himself, and has excited wild controversy over the past century, even to the point of being charged with Lincoln's murder, a charge taken seriously in its day by some distinguished historians who should have known better. Stanton has now received a good biography researched by Benjamin Thomas and completed by Harold Hyman,[2] but it frankly confesses that much of Stanton still remains a mystery. As far as we can determine, Stanton really was a very easily dislikeable person who genuinely came to like Lincoln very much, and they formed a close relationship in which Lincoln

[2] Benjamin Platt Thomas and Harold Melvin Hyman, *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War* (n.e. Greenwood Press, 1980).

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found it useful to play the friendly policeman while relying on Stanton to be the nasty policeman. Stanton had little use for civil liberties, and seems positively to have enjoyed their erosion. But since we do not know Stanton's secret mind, Mr Vidal, who cares deeply about civil liberties, ascribes such enthusiasm to Seward largely by means of day-dreams. Here we probably are mostly in the realm of fiction, although the fact of government leaders rejoicing in the making of a police state is well worth asserting. It still is probably somewhat rough on Seward, especially when so much of the real Seward is present. This is not to say that Seward could not have had such dreams, merely that Mr Vidal's insistence on limiting himself to narrative through characters of whose views a great deal is known can by his interpolations hurt the originals who have, however involuntarily, helped their recreator so well.

On the other hand, if Mr Vidal is prepared to allow governmental day-dreams of the kind which induce popular nightmares to wander from one power-drunk head to another, he has no intention of letting any of his august victims pull the wool over his eyes, if he can avoid it. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles also kept a diary; but we are not made privy to his emotions, and for a very good reason. Welles subsequently rewrote his diary. In any case, he clearly looked more interesting than he was. Mr Vidal gets a good deal of fun out of his hair, which was even more spurious than his diary.

THERE IS SO MUCH OF HISTORY in these perceptions ascribed to Seward and Chase that it is necessary to look fairly narrowly on points where Mr Vidal might have embroidered. Here it must be said at once that the points where the historical novelist customarily lets rip, in descriptions of social events, house decoration, individual appearances and so on, show every sign of being as soundly based as they could possibly be. The book breathes of documentary evidence; but there is no halitosis to be warned against. Mr Vidal wears his learning very lightly. What is a little suspicious is the degree to which high politics, as reflected by Chase and Seward, is so nakedly a business of power for its own sake. In the case of Chase, it is hard to see much violence done to the truth. Mr Vidal is quite right in saying that both men had ambitions to ensure that Lincoln would be a one-term President and that he would be succeeded by Seward or Chase as the case might be; and that in the interim they proposed to run the government which obviously could not be managed by the poor hick from Illinois. Seward very quickly realised that Lincoln was not to be managed, moved into the role of a junior partner without further ambitions, and actually enjoyed it. Chase intrigued against Lincoln again and again, was consistently outmanoeuvred and finally disposed of when his undoubtedly impressive talents had ceased to be useful in excess of his nuisance value.

But high politics is not only hunger for power, even if Mr Vidal is again correct in seeing that hunger as eroding more altruistic commitments. Both men had started in life as passionate reformers. Chase ostensibly remained a reformer, and thought of himself as one, but power swamped his real reform impulse: all of which Mr Vidal truly shows. Seward gave much more of an impression of cynicism and intoxication in

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political management. But here Mr Vidal's normal sense of irony seems to have been dulled by his own belief in the readiness of reformers to succumb to the blandishments of power. He is not, of course, showing us the young Seward any more than he is, save by anecdote from individual characters, letting us see the young Lincoln. But Seward, contrary to appearances, really cared deeply about social victims, and was unusual among Northern reformers in looking at social deprivation in the North as well as in the South. That was not all dead by the time of the Lincoln administration, and while it is reasonable to reflect the cynicism of speech with which Seward offset the noisy rhetoric of Congressional radicals like Charles Sumner, there was more cynicism in Seward's mouth than in his mind. It was sensible and right to indicate Seward's extraordinary desire to unite the warring sections of the United States by means of foreign wars and adventures. But even that reflected a genuine idealism, if of a very dangerous kind.

Mr Vidal has a fairly unbridled sense of humour when he likes, but there is very little evidence of it letting matters get out of control. There are perhaps rather more references to the Confederate leader John C. Breckinridge than is entirely justified by the economy imposed by a work of even this size, and he weaves and bobs in and out of the narrative a little inexplicably for the ordinary reader; but constant readers of Mr Vidal's work will expect slightly unusual behaviour from Breckinridges. Anyhow, the real John C. had unusual experiences, including, after the war, being mistaken for an applicant for the post of butler by an English society lady who demanded his credentials from previous employment. He cited his high offices for the Confederacy, thereby probably providing the best classification of them yet made.

THERE IS PERHAPS LESS EXCUSE for gratifying the constant reader, to say nothing of the constant author, by references explicable from Mr Vidal's other writings. Charlie Schuyler, despite, or because of, the variations on him here, is somewhat pointlessly resurrected in person in the last chapter to take part in a conversation reflecting Lincoln's similarity to Bismarck. Actually John Hay, with whom he converses, was shortly to go to Vienna in reality at that stage, and would there be *chargé d'affaires* replacing the historian John Lothrop Motley. Mr Vidal missed a trick here: Motley was a very old friend of Bismarck, had a highly important correspondence with him during the American Civil War while in Vienna, and could have offered some interesting points of comparison had Mr Vidal enabled him to have the conversation with Hay about the two men which they probably did not have. Motley's memories of hair-raising episodes in drunken student life with Bismarck at Göttingen and Berlin would have supplied interesting parallels to Lincoln's lively early life in Indiana and Illinois, of which latter Hay had had some account as depicted here. And Motley had, however briefly, been "in Abraham's bosom", as he phrased it, which was more than Charlie Schuyler could claim, having been kept out of America by his creator from 1837 to 1876 in earlier edicts.

Similarly, the Sanford family have to be dragged in here to remind us of Mr Vidal's novel about their descendants, *Washington, D.C.* They do little to incite readers to race in quest of it. Mr Vidal will insist that *Washington, D.C.* forms part of this series of novels, although admitting in his afterword to *1876*, "I have a deep mistrust of writers who produce trilogies (tetralogists are beyond the pale)." *Lincoln* stands perfectly well on its own: Mr Vidal had no business to climb over that pale, and it is not useful to be asked to think about it in any larger sense. He has made a great case for Lincoln's having resembled Bismarck in refashioning his country into a nation-state by means of a peculiarly terrible and hitherto unprecedented form of warfare. But *1876* does not particularly isolate the phenomena of that remaking which are so well pointed up in *Lincoln*, and it is, in fact, a much shallower work. If Mr Vidal itches to make a series, it would be fascinating to read him on American Reconstruction, or even on the years before the Civil War. Dred Scotts are more interesting than Sanfords.

ON THE OTHER HAND, Mr Vidal's insistence on dragging his disgusting promiscuous syphilitic homosexual William de La Touche Clancey into every book is here as always a hilarious contribution. He insists that the character is fictional, and those who know will point to the similarities in all but promiscuity, syphilis and homosexuality to one of Mr Vidal's dearest enemies. Perhaps Mr Vidal could argue that the fleeting references serve the purpose of reminding us of the continuities of American history.

Mr Clancey alone crosses the sexual frontier. Hay and Herold visit houses of prostitution; well, the high and the low did. Kate Chase is shown as loving her father probably more than she loved herself, which is certainly true: the love is not suggested as incestuous. (In *Burr*, it is implied that there was an incestuous element in Burr's relationship with his daughter Theodosia: again, it is not impossible in that case, whereas it would seem wholly impossible for the Chases.) Mr Vidal in an essay on Lincoln reprinted in his book of admirable essays *Pink Triangle and Yellow Star* (1982) wonders if Lincoln in his youth contracted syphilis and was thereby responsible for his wife's insanity, or feared he was: the book *Lincoln* does not open up that question, except by the remotest inference, and here again the author's self-discipline is praiseworthy. Herold obviously becomes romantically obsessed by John Wilkes Booth, but the sex-life of each of them is presented as firmly heterosexual. Once again, this is a rejection of cheap interest in favour of serious and largely convincing narrative.

And Mr Vidal clearly wants to be taken seriously. He has maintained times without number that literary criticism has gone to hell in a handcart since Edmund Wilson and V. S. Pritchett, and is given over to what he terms, a little snobbishly, as "the hicks and hacks of Academe"; but he wants a cheer from the historians if he can get it. No doubt nobody laughed more heartily than he when after the publication of *Burr* certain prominent historians not a thousand miles away from the University of Virginia stumped the country for fat fees to say that Jefferson was the second father of his country but certainly not of its slave population. But there is no sign of such harrying of the groves in this work.

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VERY MUCH TO THE CONTRARY, Mr Vidal's opening words nail his historiographical seriousness of purpose to the mast: for the first words are "Elihu B. Washburne." Now, Elihu B. Washburne is unlikely to send the man just off the street flocking to the bookshop-till without further examination on his own. He means no more to the average American than he does to the average Briton. Even his name suggests the arcane: the original Elihu was the only comforter of Job who talked anything like theological sense, and he is now regarded as a later interpolation (probably, did we but know it, by someone called Elihu). In American history there was the blacksmith Elihu Burritt, who campaigned for the cause of peace, and there was the statesman Elihu Root, McKinley's Secretary of War and Theodore Roosevelt's Secretary of State, who received the Nobel Prize for Peace. But who remembers Elihu B. Washburne? Even historians primarily think of him for the odd reason that he wanted to have been Secretary of State, and so Grant made him Secretary of State, on the understanding that he would promptly resign, which he did, and the business was handed over to Hamilton Fish, who knew what to do with it. But historians will be impressed with a fine mastery of obscurity of this kind. Mr Vidal has been imbibing archival dust. Start with Elihu B., and you get taken seriously.

Even though the first thing Elihu B. does, having rung up the curtain, is to have a nasty argument with a cab-driver, with some offensive allusion to his blackness, there is nothing here to cause the historian to purse his lips and shake his head. It is a good point. Elihu B. was a Republican Congressman from Illinois, and, for all the anti-slavery origins of the Republican Party which had already driven several states out of the Union by the time of this supposed incident, it is sound history to emphasise that anti-slavery sentiment, especially in the West, often coexisted with dislike of blacks. The cry "Free Soil", fashionable some years earlier, meant to many "soil free of blacks", as the great literary historian Henry Nash Smith observed.

The theme is pointedly asserted to provide useful background to Lincoln's anxiety to settle the slaves, when freed, outside the United States. Mr Vidal goes on to make much of this, and quite correctly. In fact, he is kind in not making as much as he might do, for Lincoln produced some extraordinarily inept management of an attempt to put it into practice, as even Nicolay and Hay record. And if it be wondered why Lincoln should think blacks and whites could not coexist, it is here being asserted that he based himself, as almost certainly he did, on his Illinois experience, so there is Elihu B., representing Lincoln's congressional district in this as no doubt in so much else, firmly planking the issue front and centre stage before we are one page older.

Thirty years earlier a Washburn also rang up the curtain of a novel, in this case *Death in the Fifth Position* by Edgar Box, a pleasant little murder in a ballet company if not up to the authoritative anarchy of Brahms and Simon's *A Bullet in the Ballet*; and Edgar Box, as they are kindly telling us now, was Gore Vidal. Nor are the questers for symbolism sent empty away, however much our author may despise them. Does not the name of Elihu symbolise peace-loving blacksmiths and peace-Nobelling prizewinners? For the opening third of the

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book is a very effective replay of the argument on Lincoln's responsibility for the onset of the Civil War. And Mr Vidal, very circumspectly, asserts that Lincoln manoeuvred the Confederates to fire the first shot, that he bitterly regretted it, but that he saw no alternative afterwards to fighting on to the end. The focus on Washington, D.C., means that we see relatively little of the besotted romanticism and self-admiration which drove the Confederates to reject the obvious alternative to firing on Fort Sumter: ignoring it. But heady romanticism had produced secession, and it was dependent on imagined chivalric invincibility for the core of its being. The idiotic David Herold and his associates convey something of this at first hand, and so do Mary Todd Lincoln's pro-Confederate relatives, and at greater distance the perceptions of Lincoln's associates. Lincoln's own recognition that he could gamble on such a reaction is partly, and shrewdly, muted by the use of the undoubted fact that Seward and the others deemed him far less intransigent than most of his party where he was in fact much more. The dawning realisation among his followers of what steel he was made of is one of the most effective and instructive themes in the book.

THIS REMINDER, that the war which broke out with the firing on Fort Sumter was avoidable, has importance for us on two levels. Firstly, Mr Vidal comes initially by his knowledge of high politics and Southern realities from the grandfather whose name he bears: Senator Thomas Pryor Gore. Gore was born in Reconstruction Mississippi in 1870 and although blind was elected Senator from Oklahoma several times. Mr Vidal's novel *Creation*, dedicated to his memory, is about a blind Persian diplomat contemptuously telling his Hellenised nephew about the cosmopolitanism of the régime defeated by the Greeks in the wars of Darius and Xerxes. The book *Lincoln* does not make a case for that cosmopolitanism of the old South, but it does clearly argue that an old order was swept away by the Civil War. Again, the focus on Washington, D.C., prevents any sight of the way in which the South's obsession with the defence of slavery had stifled freedom of speech and the press in the last years before the war, although the conspiracies against Lincoln as shown by Mr Vidal display the twisted legacies of that obsession. And there is the main title of Senator Thomas Gore to a place in history: the famous Gore-McLemore resolutions of 1916 which sought to deepen American neutrality by warning persons who sailed on belligerent ships that they would do so at their own risk. In vain; the protests of Gore were swept aside, his colleagues even took advantage of his blindness to trick him from consolidating his campaign, and Wilson, having been elected a second time on a peace platform, went to war within a month of his second inauguration. Clearly, Senator Gore's grandson would disagree with his grandfather about much: *Creation* (1981) would tell us that, even if we did not have other testimony from him. But in the defence of peace, and in his suspicion of governmental duplicity in placing it at risk, he has the courage and intransigence of his grandsire.

The other point is that Mr Vidal's *Lincoln* is a remarkable reflection of the changing moods of historiography over the past century. Without going to the limits of Edmund Wilson in his study of the literature of the Civil War, *Patriotic Gore*, which saw the conflict as almost meaningless in its origin, he seems to subscribe to the fashionable view of historians of the 1920s and 1930s that it was a needless war, an opinion greatly exacerbated by the memory of the more recent conflict from which Thomas Gore sought to preserve his country, the First World War. He goes back to William Henry Herndon, Lincoln's partner, for what he sees as responsible witness for events in Lincoln's Illinois years, but is firmly modern in rejecting Herndon's depiction of Mary Todd Lincoln as a designing hellion. And it is here as in so much else that we have to consider the historian from whose writings Mr Vidal asserts himself to have learned so much and whom he thanks for correcting his manuscript: David Herbert Donald.

PROFESSOR DONALD, of Harvard, wrote biographies of Herndon and of Charles Sumner; and he is also the author of a little book, *Lincoln Reconsidered*,[3] which is a masterly exercise in that literary art-form Mr Vidal so loves and in which he generally regards his countrymen as so deficient—the seminal essay. It is an exciting volume, to its readers and (as his critics have learned) to its author. There is great stress on Lincoln's consummate political skill, and on his use of the old doctrine of the American Whig party that in time of war the powers of the President were dramatically increased; and Mr Vidal makes skilful use of this, with Lincoln far outstripping that other former Whig Seward in his use of the doctrine, rather to Seward's amusement. It is not clear whether after the war was over Lincoln would have quietly subsided to the other Whig principle of the peace-time President as Presiding officer, reigning rather than ruling. Presumably Reconstruction could have been construed by him as arising out of the war and hence also under war powers. Certainly Reconstruction was in full flood by 1869 when Lincoln, had he lived, would have left office; on the other hand Mr Vidal assumes he was for a quick and easy Reconstruction, and if he got it, he would in theory have been reduced to declaring this or that foundation-stone well and truly laid. Perhaps Seward would have had that foreign war after all. There is a clear implication that Lincoln intended to make the maximum use of power once he was in office, and hence he needed the Civil War. I would tend to agree with Mr Vidal and Professor Donald, but as the professor has shown elsewhere, the war-powers doctrine was in many mouths, not all of them former Whigs. Donald's first volume on Charles Sumner,[4] a Republican but former Democrat, ends with Sumner at the outbreak of civil war going to Lincoln to point out that he has the war powers to free the slaves: which Lincoln, deeply alive to the danger of Maryland seceding and hence isolating Washington from the world, was very careful not to do for the better part of two years—and Mr Vidal keeps us on chair's edge while he conveys that fragile survival of Washington, D.C.

[3] David H. Donald, *Lincoln Reconsidered: Essays on the Civil War* (n.e. Greenwood Press, 1981).

[4] David H. Donald, *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1960).

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Professor Donald was trained by James G. Randall, very much a figure of the 1930s who saw the war as the result of a blundering generation, and Lincoln as much too intransigent in its outset. The professor has moved far from his mentor, how far his drastic revision of the latter's classic *Civil War and Reconstruction* shows.[5] But he may have been led to look with a somewhat indulgent eye on Mr Vidal's allowance of long shadows for Randall's approach. And what is greatly perpetuated here is the legacy of Randall's wife, Ruth Painter Randall, who during her husband's years of toil on Lincoln accompanied him by writing studies of Lincoln's wife, and of his children.[6] Professor Donald vigorously supported her vindication of Mary Todd Lincoln, and helped it by showing how much of the legend of the loveless marriage was cooked up by her enemy Herndon. Mr Vidal follows suit. It is a loving, not a loveless, marriage: elsewhere Mr Vidal is contemptuous of the American revival in sanctification of the family, but he will not rob the Lincoln family of the love so long questioned. Mary Todd Lincoln's extravagance and bouts of insanity are recorded with insight and sympathy, and Mr Vidal—how he would hate me for saying it—preaches a great sermon to mankind in showing how readily Mary Lincoln came to be hated by her contemporaries from Hay to Kate Chase, and how blameless she was for so much of the rancour she excited. It is an eloquent essay demanding compassion for mental instability, where so many commentators at the time and later were savage in the extreme. As a result, despite the much smaller evidence for her view of her husband on a day-to-day basis than those of Seward and Chase,[7] this is a bold, confident revelation of Mary's Abraham, and as near as anyone is likely to get. Professor Donald has served Mr Vidal very well here, and has ably perpetuated the work of the Randalls.

MR VIDAL IS ON SOMEWHAT SHAKIER GROUND in his excited response to another Donald essay in *Lincoln Reconsidered*, that on "Refighting the Civil War." One can quite see why he liked it; military history has seldom been made so informative, so perceptive and so amusing at one and the same time. It does a good day's work to revive Professor Donald's discovery that the opening moves in the war show the generals on both sides advancing almost with Jomini's textbook in hand; Professor Donald ends by arguing that while Grant did not read military manuals—after all, there was all that drinking to be done—he carried out in practice what Clausewitz had preached in theory. But Mr Vidal will have Lincoln reading Clausewitz. It pushes it a bit: one feels Lincoln will be catching up on his homework by reading Mr Vidal next. Still, it's a good device to show that one problem of the war was the necessary revolution in military strategy and tactics, and if anyone of the time saw the need to cut loose from the conventional wisdom on most matters, it was Lincoln, so why not here as elsewhere?

[5] James G. Randall and David H. Donald, *Civil War and Reconstruction* (1961).

[6] Ruth Painter Randall, *Mary Lincoln: A Biography of the Marriage* (1953); *Lincoln's Sons* (1956).

[7] See David H. Donald, ed., *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase* (1954).

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Anyhow, Mr Vidal himself is the driving force behind his emphasis on Lincoln's enthusiasm for Shakespeare, and good luck to him: certainly, Lincoln did not draw out of nowhere the Gettysburg address, surely the greatest speech ever made. The delivery of the speech is one of the brightest, hardest gems in the book, and Mr Vidal vigorously supports his argument that the text was a little different from the common form now regurgitated. The case is surely strong that Shakespeare was the Clausewitz of his best oratory, not as a quotation source, but as a craftsman; so perhaps we may indulge Mr Vidal on the military self-tutorial. Certainly Lincoln learned some craftsmanship of war from somewhere. His trouble for most of the war, as Mr Vidal stresses, was that his generals were nothing like as adventurous.

Mr Vidal will from time to time revert to being Mr Vidal, as when Lincoln sniffily complains that the Irish are the most cowardly of his troops. This is one in the eye for Irish-American pieties about the fighting race, and clearly intentional: Mr Vidal is blue-blooded enough to feel excluded, and hence disdainful, where the lower ethnicity flaunts its luck-charms. Actually, he—and his Lincoln—are paying the Irish a compliment. Why on earth should they have been anything but cowardly? They had fled from famine conditions in Ireland; they volunteered as an escape from the vile jobs to which they had been consigned. I am all in favour of being part of a nation of good soldiers Schweyk, and Mr Vidal does them a much greater service than those Irish-American publicists who seemed to assume it reflected well on the Irish to be credited with a particular pleasure in disposing of as many members of the human race as possible. Maybe Senator Gore's grandson did mean it as a compliment, turned in his own style to be sure. I will be belaboured with intelligence about their Light Brigade performance at Fredericksburg in 1862, and so will Mr Vidal: nevertheless, there must have been many Schweyks.

How did Lincoln plan to reconcile the South after the war? The traditional picture is one of clemency, and while Professor Donald has knocked a few nails into the coffin of this thesis, he has changed his mind quite a few times on Reconstruction. If he is intolerant to contradiction from others, he has no objection to contradicting himself from time to time, and it lends additional excitement to his historical writing. In any case, Mr Vidal has felt free to have Lincoln assert that he was not in favour of the harsh plan that Stanton drew up at the end of the war for military control of defeated Southern states, although Professor Donald has shown in his revision of Randall that the evidence as to Lincoln's view of the plan could go either way. When I was a graduate student in Johns Hopkins, there was on the library stacks a cover without a book inside: accident or vandalism had removed the text of William B. Hesseltine's *Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction* (1960). There was a symbolic truth in this: the Hesseltine thesis is that Lincoln did not have a plan. He was very much a man to be swayed by events, while forceful in carrying out what he did decide: and where he stuck by a theory against the dictates of reality, as with Negro colonisation, events proved him wrong. On such points he is given more of the Vidal dogmatism than the Lincoln flexibility.

In any case, Lincoln's proposals for Reconstruction during the war were intended to show that the Union had not perished, and contained the hope that the Confederacy would fall to pieces while pro-Union régimes spun themselves into reality around nuclei. The war's end would see the Union visibly in existence, rising from the ashes of the Confederacy, the nuclei having attracted substantial support from defectors induced to abjure the Confederacy by Lincoln's clemency. But by the end of the war, nothing of the kind had happened. The Confederacy had hung tough, and only went down before the superior weight of Union numbers and technology, and such appalling forms of warfare as General Sherman's scorched-earth policy in Georgia and South Carolina. So Lincoln confronted, not an enemy whose individual members had accepted mild terms, but an enemy wounded to the heart of its considerable vanity and with its old delusion of chivalric invincibility torn to pieces before its eyes.

On the sheer level of security, in whose name Lincoln had so spectacularly violated the Bill of Rights during the war, the former Confederates could be given no chances. With the removal of slavery there also would go the clause in the Constitution which had members of the House of Representatives chosen in ratio to the population, voting or not, apportioned on the assumption that a slave was three-fifths of a person; and hence the South would now be vastly increased in representation in the House of Representatives. The House resembles the British Commons in its power over finance bills; and the Republicans feared that the ex-Confederates and their Northern Democratic allies would use their new strength to repudiate the Union debt, or honour the Confederate debt. Indeed, ultimately their fears led them to write a ridiculous clause into the Fourteenth Amendment prohibiting either action.

There is no reason to think Lincoln was exempt from such perceptions. Professor Kenneth Stampp has argued that Lincoln, as an old Whig, wanted to revive the Whig party and ally with business-minded elements in the ex-Confederate South.[8] Seward certainly did. But there is no reason to believe that Lincoln had the same reason as Seward for reviving the Whigs. Seward had done well out of the Whigs, as Governor and Senator. Lincoln's Whig career had won him but a single term in the House of Representatives: it was the Republican Party which gave him his glory. And while for tactical reasons he ran on a coalition ticket for re-election in 1864, there is no reason to assume he would have rejoiced in the disappearance of the party which made him. Nor had he any intention of risking in peace the victories which had been gained with such dreadful cost in war.

My guess is that if he had lived, Lincoln would not have been simply vindictive, as many Republicans were, but that he would have been inflexible in preventing the former Confederacy from posing any risk to security. His Second Inaugural is often paraded as a promise of clemency, but Mr

[8] Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1864-1877* (1965).

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Vidal somewhat revealingly omits from his quotation of it, both here and in his essay, the following passage:

> "If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled up by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said 'the judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.' "

This is terrifying stuff—and in my view necessary reading for white persons who claim that no guilt accrues to them for the black inheritance of the effects of slavery: here and in the USA, those who say this are not so ready to dispense with their own inheritance of prosperity which in the past slavery helped to build up.

Mr Vidal, of course, is unlikely to care for the passage. He is an anti-Christian, and he goes to great lengths to deny Lincoln's Christianity, almost certainly correctly. He does note that the Second Inaugural ignores Christ. But God here is a symbol, a form of shorthand, a new language device. Mr Vidal is correct in seeing Lincoln as hostile to slavery but animated from first to last by the need to preserve the Union and, he feels, consolidate it.

And Mr Vidal enjoys Julia Ward Howe's *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. But outside the White House that hymn had become the expression of the war's transformation into revolution in the eyes of so many during the conflict itself. It gave Lincoln's armies a sense of holy war of the kind which had vanished from the white world when Monmouth's men were cut to pieces at Sedgemoor. Where most troops marched to battle on rollicking ditties celebrating sexual urges which romped in defiance of the omnipresence of death, the Union armies won their victory by chanting "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." Mr Vidal can say that the world of Lincoln and Stanton remained immune from these things. But Lincoln, the cunning politician Mr Vidal shows him to be, was attuned to the new rhetoric, and here he spoke it directly. And he meant, I think, that to bring the war to an end reconciliation could only take place when military rule had done its work of extirpating the last shadows of ex-Confederate sedition.

But we really don't know. I may think this, Mr Vidal may imply that, and Professor Donald, perhaps, go on in the future to insist on the other thing. Lincoln died, and we will never know how he would have coped. And on this Mr Vidal does

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have the last word. He implies through the mind of John Hay in his very last lines that Lincoln

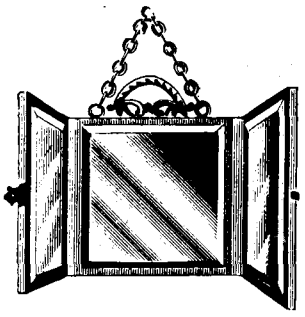
> "in some mysterious fashion, had willed his own murder as a form of atonement for the great and terrible thing that he had done by giving so bloody and absolute a rebirth to his nation."

On that level the argument about the Reconstruction he intended becomes futile, and he knew it would. And if he did will it—and we have that dream to contend with—he would also have known that the Second Inaugural would be the testimony that his followers would remember.

MAYBE *LINCOLN* IS A NOVEL. It is certainly a use of fiction to enhance history and from time to time, often justifiably, to supply attractive guesses for matters hidden from history. It is still much closer to real history than, say, *War and Peace*, provided that we remember Mr Vidal's history is that of men and Tolstoy's of mankind, and prefer the more old-fashioned approach of Mr Vidal. There is much to be said for old fashions.

Peering through the Privet

British Historical Writing—By VERNON BOGDANOR



"HISTORIANS", snapped Mr Khrushchev in 1956, "are dangerous, and capable of turning everything topsy-turvy. They have to be watched." From the earliest times, men of power have sought to harness history to the purpose of the state, requiring of the historian that he endorse the officially approved exegesis of the past. But it is in the ideological dictatorships of the 20th century that the past has been most efficiently subordinated to the needs of the present. In the countries of the Communist bloc, the historian is, as it were, forbidden to remember, for the régime which their rulers seek to create is one without memory, an ideal almost achieved in contemporary Poland or Czechoslovakia. Indeed, it is Gustav Husak, Czechoslovakia's seventh President, who is known, so Milan Kundera tells us, as "the president of forgetting."[1]

This hostility to history and to historians is hardly surprising. For it is a pre-condition of effective government in such countries that memory of the past be erased—no mention of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia, no allusion to the Nazi-Soviet pact in Jaruzelski's Poland, and—supreme irony—only two mentions of Stalin in the Soviet history textbooks of the Khrushchev era. A nation without history is a nation unable to challenge the official version of events. Deprived of a past, it is bereft of alternatives for the future, and therefore also of hope.

But democracies also have their problems with history. They too have their national myths and fables, which the historian—a natural sceptic if ever there was one—is bound to challenge. Of course, the velvet glove of the democrat is vastly preferable to the iron fist of the tyrant, but it can, on occasion, prove far more insidious. Marc Ferro, in his endlessly stimulating book *The Use and Abuse of History*, subtitled *How The Past is Taught*,[2] is concerned to catalogue the distortions which arise from nationalistic history. These distortions condition the way in which we approach the world, and, in particular, the way in which we come to understand the experience of other countries.

> "Our image of other peoples, or of ourselves for that matter, reflects the history we are taught as children. This history marks us for life. Its representation, which is for each one of us a discovery of the world, of the past of societies, embraces all our passing or permanent opinions, so that the traces of our first questioning, our first emotions, remain indelible."

Ferro's examples are chosen from democracies as well as dictatorships, from the United States as well as Soviet Russia, India as well as Nazi Germany, France as well as Poland. In almost every human society, history has been taught as a celebration of national values, its essence coming to be submerged in the grand design of educating the young to become good citizens.

The encouragement of national conceit, it may be suggested, is hardly a present risk in the democracies of the West. The danger, rather, may be one of paying insufficient attention to those aspects of a country's historical experience which fit uneasily, or not at all, into the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. So far as the United States is concerned, Ferro pinpoints the 1960s as the decade when "good-fortune History", depicting America as "tolerant, level-headed, lively and critical", came to be replaced by the deconstruction and indeed balkanisation of "white history", with each minority seeking "a version of American history that will give it a privileged position. . . ." The melting-pot, he tells us, has become a salad-bowl, and it becomes more and more difficult for the historian to isolate what it is that is distinctively American about the history of the United States.

[1] Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (Faber, 1982), p. 158.

[2] *The Use and Abuse of History*. By MARC FERRO. Routledge, £15.95.

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Ferro is Co-Director of *Annales*, but *The Use and Abuse of History* repudiates many of the ideas normally associated with that school. There is no trace of that contempt for *l'histoire événementielle*, that *petite science de la contingence* of which Fernand Braudel has written so contemptuously. The reductionist dream of a universal history, whether it derives from Marx or from *Annales*, cannot, Ferro thinks, any longer be sustained:

> "The mirror has been shattered. Universal history is dead; it died from being a European mirage, which reflected Europe's own illusions as to her own destiny."

It is, for him, of the essence of history that there be scope for alternative historical traditions which legitimately compete, rather than a single model to which all "true" history ought to approximate. His book, therefore, breathes a tolerance and open-mindedness not always associated with the school to which he belongs. There cannot, he argues, be

> "a single universally-trusted scientific truth, for the versions of the past suggested, imposed or copied are different and contradictory. In these circumstances, to 'grind out' some 'universal history' from a single centre, and even more, a single institution, is an act of imposture or tyranny. It is the heart of liberty to allow several historical traditions to co-exist and even to fight it out."[3]

[3] See also the brilliant essay "New Histories for Old", reprinted in *The Crossman Confessions, and Other Essays in Politics, History and Religion*. By ELIE KEDOURIE. Mansell Publishing, £16.50, $30.00.

The Use and Abuse of History is itself an eloquent defence of a liberal conception of history, and it is difficult to imagine any historian who would not profit from reading it.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN a society's history and the picture which it forms of itself has recently been brought into unexpected prominence in Britain as a result of two speeches by the Education Secretary, Sir Keith Joseph—the first to a conference of the Historical Association in February 1984, and the second to a conference of American historians at Berkeley in August 1984.

That a minister responsible for education in Britain should actually pronounce upon the purposes of education is itself, surprisingly, a matter of some note in Britain. Until recently, ministers entirely avoided entering the "secret garden" of the curriculum, confining their attention to the working of institutions and the provision of finance. For, within the British framework of divided powers, educational provision is broadly a matter for local authorities while what is actually taught is primarily the responsibility of the teachers. Sir Keith in fact lacks the powers to enforce his conception of what is educationally desirable upon politically autonomous local authorities. All that he can do is to seek a consensus with the other partners in the education system—local authorities, teachers and parents. He operates essentially through influence, his authority lying in the plausibility of what he says rather than in his power to enforce it. In asking fundamental questions about

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the purpose of education, therefore, Sir Keith was departing with some boldness from the informal conventions which have governed the actions of education ministers since the War.

In his speeches, Sir Keith was concerned to make a case for the primacy of national history "as an inescapable part of any balanced school history course." He was careful to distinguish "national" from "nationalistic" history, and certainly offered no encouragement to those who, *pace* Ferro, see history as an exercise in national chauvinism. Nevertheless, Sir Keith did not entirely avoid falling into the snare which lies in wait for any politician courageous enough to pronounce upon the role of the humanities in education: and he left himself open to the criticism that he was seeking to conscript history into the service of a particular case. There was, he said,

> "a place for fostering through the teaching of history a sense of pride in one's country and its achievements. Perhaps I can put it best by saying that the teacher should lead the pupil towards his or her own decisions about which aspects of national events, institutions or culture are most deserving of admiration."

And he has also declared that

> "one of the aims of studying history is to understand the development of the shared values which are a distinctive feature of British society and culture and which continue to shape private attitudes and public policy."

Whether those shared values, whatever they may be, continue to shape attitudes and policy at a time when Britain faces the massive problems of large-scale unemployment and inner-city deprivation, as well as a fundamental challenge to its authority from striking coal-miners, is, of course, a moot question, and one perhaps to be answered by the student of society rather than the historian or politician, but it cannot do the cause of history any good to be identified in this way with a highly contentious view of contemporary Britain. Imagine the hullaballoo which would ensue were an Education Secretary of the Left to justify the teaching of history in terms of the class struggle or the materialist interpretation of history.

One ought not to use the past in the interests of the present, finding significance in whatever casts a glow upon one's own favoured values. For, inevitably, the essential "historicity" of the past is lost. The historian ought not to look for anything beyond history and Sir Keith would have done well to remember Fustel de Coulanges' dictum that "Patriotism is a virtue, and history is a science, and the two should not be confounded."

At first sight, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*, edited by Kenneth O. Morgan,[4] might seem the answer to Sir Keith's prayers. Its sumptuously illustrated pages—and it is one of those rare books in which the illustrations actually contribute to the narrative instead of remaining entirely separate from it—tell the story of a nation at whose key moments "society coalesced rather than divided", while the blurb claims that "the authors emphasise the elements of continuity in British cultural and social ideals, bringing out that special awareness of nationality and patriotism which has been such a distinctive feature of British society."

In fact, *The Oxford Illustrated History* is far from being a celebration of patriotism, or indeed of anything else. For the concept of national tradition is defined so broadly by the editor that hardly any major historical figure need be excluded from it. The Levellers, Defoe, Cobbett, Morris, Tawney and Orwell are, on this view, as much a part of the British tradition as those whom they opposed: the tradition includes the dissenters—A. J. P. Taylor's trouble makers[5]—as well as those who championed authority through different generations. This is splendidly ecumenical and a welcome antidote to the wearisome polemics of Right and Left; yet it can so easily serve to reduce history to a blandness which evades the hard questions that need to be answered.

Any criticism of *The Oxford Illustrated History*, however, must begin with the plain statement that it is a very good book indeed. Its ten authors write clearly and, in general, with authority on their chosen periods, and the book is quite admirably suited to the requirements of that perhaps mythical creature, the "general reader" for whom it is avowedly intended. It would be difficult to imagine this particular job being done better, so that criticism must direct itself to the conception of history embodied in *The Oxford Illustrated History* rather than to the way this conception has been brought to fruition.

For, if the virtues of *The Oxford Illustrated History* are those of its contributors, its defects are those of British historiography. Its primness and disinclination to ask those large questions which are, in a sense, forced upon the historian not only by developments in historiography itself, but also by those in the social sciences—political science, sociology and anthropology—are symptomatic of much of the writing on contemporary political history in Britain. Marx is present as a fleeting visitor, but there is no mention at all of social theorists such as Weber, Pareto or Schumpeter, nor—more importantly—any sign that their theories have been absorbed into the mainstream of British historical thinking. As a result, the hard problems of historical interpretation are submerged in the fluency of the narrative.

Consider, for example, the issue of the rise of the Labour Party in the first two decades of the 20th century, one of the fundamental factors shaping Britain's contemporary history. One of the contributors to *The Oxford Illustrated History*, H. C. G. Matthew, who writes on "The Liberal Age", has himself been involved in an important controversy on this subject.[6] Was the rise of Labour a product of contingent factors such as the split in the Liberal Party and quarrels between

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[4] *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain*. Edited by Kenneth O. Morgan. Oxford University Press, £15.00.

[5] See A. J. P. Taylor, *The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy 1792-1939* (1957).

[6] H. C. G. Matthew, R. I. McKibbin, and J. A. Kay, "The Franchise Factor in the Rise of the Labour Party", *English Historical Review* (1976), pp. 723-751.

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its leaders; or was it rather a result of more deep-seated social factors—the growth of class feeling, increasing trade-union membership; and above all, the expansion of the franchise in 1918, which increased the registered electorate from 8 million to 21 million?

Considerable light has been shed on such questions not only by historians, but also by psephologists—students of elections who, with the benefit of modern statistical tools, have been able, through ecological analysis, "to converse with the dead."[7] Further, the comparative investigations of political scientists have done much to expose the connections between party systems and social change; and they have analysed those factors which make for a freezing of party systems and those which make for change. The work of the Scandinavian political scientist Stein Rokkan, for example, has suggested that the effects of the class cleavage in a particular country depend crucially upon the nature of pre-industrial cleavages, their role in the state formation process, and the political alignments which result from this interaction.[8]

The suggestion is that it is the direction and strength of these earlier alignments rather than the class situation which determine whether or not there is class politics in a particular country. If this view is correct, then one cannot explain the rise of a class party such as the Labour Party by economic or social factors at all, but must look to specific *political* conditions for an explanation. Rokkan's schematism has been enormously influential in the work of a number of historians, such as Charles Tilly and Immanuel Wallerstein,[9] but it has impinged little upon British discussions of political change, which remain obstinately stuck in the familiar grooves. Yet, in dealing with the history of a society, it is possible to illuminate it by applying —not uncritically, of course—the techniques of modern social science, and it is a pity that the opportunity has been lost in what will undoubtedly be a widely-read general history of Britain.

BUT MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY is as preoccupied with the People as it is with a society's élites. It is especially concerned not to categorise "a whole nation on the basis of a tiny minority",[10] but rather to treat the history of a nation as the history of all its people, however difficult such an enterprise turns out to be. Such history tends to the breaking-down of the generalisations traditionally proffered by historians and social scientists—history becomes *pointilliste* as it seeks to reduce complex phenomena to their most elementary forms. The work of the *Annales* school has made us familiar with the history of preconceptions, of *mentalités*, a field of history whose most profound practitioners in this country are probably Keith Thomas and Theodore Zeldin.[11] Indeed, the two volumes of Zeldin's history of France are perfect examples of a kind of history which, going behind public events, recreates the attitudes and passions which connect them to the lives of individuals.

The Oxford Illustrated History is by no means unaware of the role of popular attitudes in history. Kenneth O. Morgan in particular, in his concluding chapter on "The Twentieth Century" (surely the most difficult one to write), bravely attempts to sum up Britain's 20th-century experience.

> "The truth was, perhaps, that Britain in the years from 1914 to 1983 had not changed all that fundamentally. Despite two world wars, the mass unemployment of the thirties, and the social turmoil of the seventies, the face of Great Britain, like Snowdonia or Thomas Hardy's Egdon Heath, might show surface changes of light or pattern; but the underlying ideology remained the same."

Yet *The Oxford Illustrated History* can by no stretch of the imagination be called "Populist History", as Max Beloff has dubbed A. J. P. Taylor's *English History 1914-45*—history

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[7] Kenneth D. Wald, *Crosses on the Ballot: Patterns of British Voter Alignment Since 1885* (Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 75.

[8] Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties* (Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1970).

[9] See Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton University Press, 1975); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System of Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Academic Press, N.Y., 1974).

[10] Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945. Vol. II, Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* (1977), p. 1152.

[11] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (Weidenfeld, 1971) and *Man and the Natural World: Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (Allen Lane, 1983). Theodore Zeldin, *France 1848-1945* (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, 2 vols, 1973, 1977).

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looked at from the point of view of those who were its subjects. The focus of *The Oxford Illustrated History* is not clear enough for that. There is not really much sense of what the British people were actually like at different periods of their history, no attempt to break down the conventional categorisations of periods and historical action. Rather, this is traditional narrative history, an essential part of the high culture of our times, something which every educated person will be expected to have read. But it could so easily have been much more.

CONTEMPORARY HISTORY in Britain has remained virtually unaffected by the debates and controversies which have elsewhere racked the discipline. What Lawrence Stone has called the "heroic phase" in the writing of history—between the mid-1950s and the end of the 1970s—has, on the whole, left the writing of recent British history untouched.

The reasons for this are implicit in Marc Ferro's discussion of the nature and function of history in the last chapter of *The Use and Abuse of History*. First, there is the relative freedom of British history from the ideological turmoil which has affected her Continental neighbours. Writing of France, Ferro suggests that "The bankruptcy of ideology has had the effect of making historical discourse less authoritative; quite suddenly, historical writing has appeared to be suspect in its approach, perhaps excessively indulgent towards one or another style of thinking: liberal, conservative, Marxist." But in Britain "the bankruptcy of ideology" has made less impact because most British historians have never been consciously ideological. Avoiding ideology, they nevertheless became implicit adherents of an anti-ideology, the Whig interpretation of history. Yet frontal assaults upon this interpretation have failed to stimulate a wide-ranging debate among contemporary political historians on new approaches to history; nor have they stimulated a greater readiness to assimilate the methods of the social sciences.

It has of course been Britain's good fortune to have avoided those crises of identity which have so shaken other societies. Yet it is this very atmosphere of tranquillity which has made it so difficult to promote controversy about the nature and function of history as a discipline. History flourishes best in a liberal society characterised by the clash of competing ideas and arguments. British liberalism, on the other hand, tends too often to the timid and defensive, a retreat behind the privet hedge for fear of what lies outside. Careful and cautious, it does not feel the need to face those profound questionings which, for very different reasons, American and Continental historians have been compelled to confront.

FURTHER, the discovery of the Third World and the undermining of Eurocentric conceptions of history has not had the same impact in Britain as in many other societies since the experience of decolonisation has been less traumatic; nor have ethnic problems in Britain yet compelled a deconstruction of traditional history as they have in the United States. In societies where there have been challenges to the official conception of history, historians have been forced to defend their particular perspectives; and indeed in those societies, as Ferro says, "The idea that there might be a single and universally acceptable vision of history has become increasingly illusory." In Britain, on the other hand, such challenges have been conspicuous by their absence. A society which has never been under attack is under no incentive to consider how best to sharpen its weapons of defence.

For although it is illegitimate to seek to illuminate the problems of the past through the distorting mirror of contemporary preconceptions, it is possible nevertheless that the methods and style of humanistic disciplines are influenced by more general social concerns. Perhaps indeed the state of British historiography is an appropriate symptom of the culture of nostalgia so piercingly dissected by Martin Wiener in his book *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980* (Cambridge University Press, 1981). To the extent that this culture, under the relentless pressures of economic decline, comes under threat, so also one might expect a more radical questioning of traditional methods of writing contemporary history. If that happens, it will once again become a truly exciting subject, and perhaps also "dangerous and capable of turning everything topsy-turvy." For, upon reflection, Mr Khrushchev's words seem to offer the greatest compliment of all to the historian, and one which he must aspire to deserve.

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Showing the Years?

On British Archaeology—By CHARLES THOMAS

ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS back, the Council for British Archaeology—that splendid and necessary umbrella-body, rightly financed by the nation to tell Government what is right and what is wrong about official attitudes to our past heritage—went through a sticky patch. Money was short (it always is) and the CBA had taken on far more than its small central staff could handle. There were either not enough committees, or there were too many—including some that never met. It had long ceased to be clear in every case who was supposed to be doing what.

A diagnosis, which preceded sensible and in parts radical restructuring, was supplied externally. This whole organisation was apparently suffering from maladies of middle age. The analogy is not with individual human beings, the middle-aged of whom would anyhow deny the existence of such a malaise, but with commerce and industry; small businesses and firms that expand too quickly and end up (or so the archaeologists were told) with no middle management, ongoing cash-flow problems, poor relations with the workforce, and a total absence of a command structure expressible as a simple flow-diagram. Though at that particular period words like *interface* still belonged to purely scientific circles. I suppose it can be retrospectively recorded that a new and dynamic interface scenario was constructed between the CBA and what used to be the Ministry of Public Building and Works; and that we of the CBA, in revising our customer-approach, presented image-wise a streamlined executive, spearheaded by a fresh and aggressive boardroom team.

At least, I thought that was what happened; and I think I said so, using old-fashioned words, in my outgoing presidential address to the CBA in 1973. This slice of politico-archaeological history is being adduced because, in much less obvious ways, one could argue that the whole of British archaeology is at the moment suffering from an undiagnosed middle-aged spread—perhaps with signs of incipient cardiac arrest?—and may in its turn also need a short sharp course of reform-aerobics. We can return to this theme. As for the CBA, archaeology, and the early 1970s, on reading Barri Jones's *Past Imperfect*[1] I felt a kinship with that *penseur* (was it Sydney Smith?) who wished he could be half as sure of anything as a certain friend seemed to be of everything.

Past Imperfect sets out to cover one aspect of archaeological affairs in Britain between roughly 1969 and 1983. It is the author's bad luck as well as ours that, shortly after his printers took over, Mrs Thatcher's inner circle found a moment between British Aerospace and British Telecom to bring about the part-privatisation of our national monuments. The new (April 1984) Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission, which Lord Montagu and his fellow-Commissioners would like us to call "English Heritage", is here briefly preluded. It is not however a Quango, but a statutory commission employing a few thousand transmogrified Civil Servants at the same or higher salaries; the new aspects are its logo, a square cogwheel which I am told is supposed to be the ground plan of a medieval turret, and a Thatcherian command to exhibit entrepreneurial flair in seeking private sponsorship and in distancing the state from its obvious duty to guard the national heritage.

If English Heritage is the awful end-product, Professor Jones's book forms a private account of the rescue archaeology movement that made up the long and painful gestation; American readers will please note that the same thing in the United States has been called "salvage archaeology." *Past Imperfect*, opening at the time of the CBA's overhaul, concentrates on the tale of a parallel body, RESCUE—a Trust for British Archaeology. RESCUE's formation involved a good many archaeologists who were mixed up with the CBA; rather than hazard the latter's charitable status, they formed a new ginger-group to lambast the sluggard Government, to create their own parliamentary lobby (in which Dick Taverne was Superman), to raise money from industry, and to press for fierce new laws and a great increase in funds. Around the year 2000, or even in the 1990s, a future chronicler will give us RESCUE's story in detail; and that will dwell on its general success, and the quite extraordinary fashion in which most of its laudable objectives were reached.

Alas, as a veteran of those battles myself, I get very little flavour of all this from *Past Imperfect*. In his excision of the errors, scandals, even the comedies, Barri Jones seems unwittingly to have killed the sense of excitement; though in fairness to the author it must be allowed that he calls this "a subjective view." In part, yes; he is far too modest in chronicling one of his own achievements, the rescuing against fearsome odds and disgraceful opposition of a rich Roman past that Manchester hardly knew it owned.

However, I must give three reasons why, to me, the book cannot stand as more than a personal and idiosyncratic account of Britain's *nouvelle vague* in rescue archaeology. Firstly, the genesis of and the early years within RESCUE were of set purpose, and probably thus uniquely within our whole heritage-awareness movement, documented in every conceivable respect, including hours of tape-recordings. The accessible archive is probably a richer and most certainly a more reliable source than imprecise recollection. And then, secondly, the emphasis of *Past Imperfect*—written as it is by a distinguished

[1] *Past Imperfect: The Story of Rescue Archaeology*. By BARRI JONES. Heinemann Educational Books, £14.50.

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Romanist—strikes me, as apparently it strikes other reviewers, as being far too urban-centred. The case histories are mostly of large English cities of Roman origin; the villains are greedy post-War developers, pliant councillors, and crass Town Halls.

Granted that much of what Barri Jones claims is supportable, later chroniclers of RESCUE and indeed some would-be chroniclers now might prefer a broader sample. The prime agencies of destruction in the recent past, as indeed today, have been agricultural development (allied to afforestation), and the spread of housing and industrial estates well outside the Victorian and Edwardian bounds of ancient cities. Against this sombre backdrop, urban clearance and refashioning become, like construction of the motorways, archaeologically awful but more episodic than continuous.

Bearing in mind today's calls to extend planning controls to agriculture, a veritable Save Britain Now campaign arising from many quarters, a third criticism follows. *Past Imperfect* might be accused of describing rescue archaeology in too great an isolation. The work of RESCUE, like the labours of the Council for British Archaeology, has a context beyond archaeological affairs. It cannot be separated from that of all the pressure-groups acting in the interests of ecology, rationalised recreation and the demands to preserve virtually every aspect of the national heritage. When, in the late 1960s, archaeologists brought their own discipline into the environmental movement they did a far, far better thing than they realised. The average Young Archaeologist in 1984 is politically an environmentalist; a militant Green. Sadly, it will take another book to explain why.

IF ONE CAN POINT TO the existence of rescue (or salvage) archaeology in the United States, and more recently in Europe, let no one suppose that international contacts are wholly lacking. From Britain, envious eyes used to be cast at the Continental preferences for centralised state archaeology; at the existence of laws that underwrite site-preservation, or the acquisition of material for national and regional museums, in manners still unacceptable in the United Kingdom's body politic. Conversely (though less widely appreciated), other countries have envied and have begun to emulate Britain's reactions to archaeological loss. Singled out for some admiration have been: publicly-funded excavation teams, regional flying-squads, "acknowledgement payments" (cash inducements *not* to disturb monuments), the involvement of amateur workers, and our county-based Sites and Monuments units that—working with planning authorities—record the visible and detectable heritage in extraordinary detail and supply the means to monitor creeping loss and to impose developmental constraints.

In this international field, external and fruitful contact has of course been hampered by language barriers (as usual), by shortages of time and travel-moneys, and by the lack of sufficient fora where such matters can be compared, discussed and transferred. One prerequisite here must be periodic surveys of the state of play, and a most useful survey is now offered in *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage*.[2] Henry Cleere, currently the CBA's Director, came to that post from an United Nations organisation, is fluent in several European languages, and acts as the principal British voice on ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites). The grab sample of reports that he has edited and in a good few cases also translated covers the United States; France, West Germany, Denmark, Italy and Czechoslovakia; and for good measure and perspective, India, Nigeria, Mexico and Peru. Leading exponents describe the legal and actual operation of (to use the American-inspired term) "cultural resource management" in their countries, with special reference to the archaeological resource and its protection.

This excellent and timely round-up holds many lessons. Even for archaeologists who are no longer Little Englanders, it probably holds as many surprises. Things in France are seen as less rosy from Calais than they are from Dover. The informed lay-visitor to France, once he or she has grasped the sheer scale of the agrarian landscape and the depopulated wild regions, may be excused for asking, "Where *is* all the archaeology (beyond Nîmes, Carnac, Lascaux, etc.)?" Dr Cleere's French contributor Alain Schnapp would, it appears, certainly excuse such questions, more in sorrow than in anger. He feels that "French archaeology suffers from that lack of contact with the general public which in general affects all the scientific disciplines in France." If archaeological affairs in the *République* are at the moment subject to the middle-aged diseases, take heart: there have been cheering indications that a generation of Young Turks is coming to the fore, a generation inspired by those lessons hard-learned in other lands and one whose hesitant efforts Schnapp sees as essential "for a renascence of archaeology in France."

If so, practical aid from Britain will not be confined to sermons on the virtues of rescue-archaeology organisation. It is a matter of quiet pride (though I divorce this most strongly from hints of either chauvinism or competition) that the corresponding level of British archaeologists—once more inclined to unravel the prehistories of distant realms within the former Empire—can now produce Continental as well as home-based survey volumes. This, too, may point to a change of direction on the part of middle-aged British archaeology, and a welcome one. Indeed it could even be *easier* to attempt rapportage of overall archaeological research (by either period or theme) abroad, than in the British Isles where the volume of undigested discoveries and the now quite speedy pace of publication must combine to discourage the synthesist.

IS IT SOMETHING to do with Professor Glyn Daniel's own Francophile leanings and his famous gastro-archaeological field trips that most of the authors involved in *Ancient France*[3] seem to be Cambridge graduates? Cause or coincidence, French archaeology as much as that of other western European lands will welcome this collection of nine regional studies concentrating on aspects of the long Neolithic phase. Elegantly produced, stuffed with hard data, and editorially

[2] *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage: A Comparative Study of World Cultural Resource Management Systems*. Edited by HENRY CLEERE. Cambridge University Press, £22.50.

[3] *Ancient France, 6000-2000 BC*. Edited by CHRISTOPHER SCARRE. Edinburgh University Press, £19.00.

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pruned of inessential verbiage, the essays cover most of France (including geographically the Channel Isles) and Corsica, and provide at their tail a bibliography of nearly 40 pages that would have found a ready market on its own.

This is a professional work and it would be pointless to comment at length on its scope and contents outside the pages of a professional journal. The characteristics that do call for mention are picked out in Glyn Daniel's preface and in Christopher Scarre's editorial introduction, and I shall repeat them. The approach has been uniform; the authors describe their sites and regions in terms of environment and ecology, they adhere to a chapter-plan which is sensible and informative, and they present diagnostic finds, site plans, and radiocarbon determinations in a manner permitting proper comparison. If they wish, in Professor Daniel's words, to be seen as "prehistoric human geographers", then they deserve the title—and human geographers in the conventional or non-archaeological sense could do a lot worse than emulate the standards here set. *Ancient France* is a fine volume. It will enrich French prehistory and its format and method jointly enrich the tradition of archaeological writing.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN pure prehistory, where in the absence of any form of internal documentation and any explicit contact between pre-literate societies and literate and higher civilisations elsewhere the archaeologist reigns supreme, and later periods where languages and history must intervene, is still slightly emotive. There is no fixed terminology for this in English, and even in the more precise French *préhistoire* and *protohistoire* would require further definition. In West-Central and Western Europe, obviously the watershed arrives when detectable contact of any sort begins; between the descendants of the societies described in *Ancient France* (and the peoples beyond them), and the literate worlds of the Greeks, Etruscans, Carthaginians and eventually the Romans.

It would be—it is—a tall order to produce a general survey, written from the standpoint of temperate Europe rather than looking north from the Mediterranean, because such must cover just about the whole first millennium B.C. Dr John Collis gives us, in the *The European Iron Age*,[4] a taut and cohesive narrative compressed into less than 200 pages. He selects three consecutive themes; the (Anatolian) origin and the spread of iron-working, the post-Mycenaean expansion of Mediterranean trade and the influence of its wake, and the emergence up to the early days of the Roman Empire of urban centres, the first true cities, and the accompanying crystallisation of European society into states.

His preference, as well as the confines he and his publishers have set, takes him into a more archaeological and less art-historical treatment than has been favoured in the few comparable previous works. Given the long emphasis upon European Iron Age or Early Celtic art, this is actually a refreshing departure from tradition; it is a brave book and I think a successful one. If not all his colleagues will agree with all his interpretations, they will respect the hard work, reason, and clear development of arguments.

CAN ONE, IN THIS NEW EUROPE outlook, produce for the home market (mainly in British university teaching) "an elementary and comprehensive synthesis of the new discoveries and new interpretations of European prehistory"? And if so, could the informed amateur or extra-mural enthusiast be expected to understand it?

Four public-spirited authors have thought all this possible—three from Southampton and one from Cardiff. Dr Timothy Champion emerges only slightly ahead of his colleagues as the originator and notional general editor of *Prehistoric Europe*,[5] but beyond that the successive chapters from human origins and the Palaeolithic up to the dawn of Roman times are not attributed and we have, genuinely, the collaborative work of four authors rather than an edited collection of topic-papers. Maps, tables, histograms and other diagrams are frequent and clear, and from time to time, enclosed in prominent grey rectangular frames, the reader is given a nutshell summary of whatever is being discussed at necessarily greater length. This useful device, which may typographically have originated with

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[4] *The European Iron Age*. By JOHN COLLIS. Batsford, £17.95, paper £9.95.

[5] *Prehistoric Europe*. By TIMOTHY CHAMPION, CLIVE GAMBLE, STEPHEN SHENNAN and ALASDAIR WHITTLE. Academic Press, $45.00, £28.20; paper $23.50, £14.50.

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Reader's Digest but is here employed with great skill, prevents discursion and will be of value and help.

As for the parent text, expert readers may detect individual hands at work, and the bibliography (which makes little concession to the British public library system) may confirm the influence of certain fashions in prehistoric thought and interpretation; but the claims for integrated collaboration certainly hold good. *Prehistoric Europe* can be welcomed. The need for it does or did exist and there is no current rival offering the same coverage in unified form.

STILL ON THE CONTINENT and returning for the moment to Henry Cleere's *Approaches to the Archaeological Heritage*, I was struck by a comment in Kristian Kristiansen's report from Denmark. He writes that within that country archaeology has always been national in character, forming an important part of national history and ideology; "as such it may be regarded as a scientific extension of earlier national mythology." This happens to be true of a great many younger countries—one thinks of Africa in general, Zimbabwe in particular—but here it set me pondering on the remarkable appeal of Viking York.

The Scandinavian invasion and settlement of parts of Britain (and Ireland) was less than national in its distribution and duration, and in the more Celtic areas, the City of Dublin possibly excepted, it would be hard to whip up much enthusiasm for the Norse aspects of ancestry, early history and visible remains. Yorkshire, with its ease of access to present-day Scandinavia and with the heart of its oldest city largely remodelled for tourists, is another matter. These comments in no way belittle the achievements of the York Archaeological Trust under Dr Peter Addyman, or the sponsorship won from royalty, industry, and Magnus Magnusson, or the magnificent fund-raising that has made YAT almost independent of the vagaries of State grants. Viking York, *Jorvik*, where visitors are shuttled around a total reconstruction of everyday life on the site of the excavated Coppergate, takes audio-visual presentation into the added dimensions of movement, smells and (for all I know, since I await my first visit) personal touch.

How this was brought about remains to a certain degree the YAT's commercial secret, and perhaps in due course we shall be told. The site's exploration was directed for the Trust by Richard Hall; in *The Viking Dig*[6] he gives us the account of the work, the discoveries and interpretation in black-and-white and colour with a fully comprehensible text. One can only express further congratulation. On a wider view of York, there remains a niggling academic worry about any equivalent presentation of the extensive Roman-period remains and diggings, lest *Eboracum* be too long eclipsed by the admittedly more marketable *Jorvik*. That worry must stand. Meanwhile, the present handsome book will undoubtedly reach the market for which it is designed.

I REVERT TO THE QUESTION of British archaeology; is it now in a middle-age syndrome? One of the symptoms may be a certain jerkiness in the rate of production of archaeological writing; not simply reports, of which we have a plethora (and some, student dissertations churned out in print with little or no revision, make pretty awful reading as to prose and construction), but major synthetic treatments intended to summarise existing knowledge and suggest new avenues ahead. I omit a regular trickle of theoretical works, representing a second stage in what was once the New Archaeology, that I find too often as hard to comprehend as they are divergent from the mainstream of archaeological research. This inner questioning, this uncertainty about what archaeology consists of, is another symptom of ill-ease.

Nevertheless, the good solid round-up volume can still appear, and Dr Helen Clarke's sober and helpful conspectus of *The Archaeology of Medieval England*[7] is one such. She writes from a base-line of practical experience in the field, her own teaching at London and her position as Secretary of the Society for Medieval Archaeology. One audience that she may have had in mind—and if not, I suggest it now—could be the historians whose moans about the vast sums allegedly spent on archaeology (to the impoverishment of their own research) have begun to creep into reviews of late. Helen Clarke should be seen as, by implication, answering much of that criticism simply because she sets out in clear and by no means difficult ways the end-products of medieval archaeological discovery. She has no particular axe to grind, no off-beat models of the past to propose, as she guides us through town and country, churches and castles, and the crafts and industries of the Middle Ages. There is a full bibliography. Colonnade Books, the series from the (independent) British Museum Publications, now includes a growing list of these general surveys and we can heartily press for more.

FINALLY—BY WAY OF CODA, and not just because I worked for a decade in Edinburgh—I draw attention to a *Festschrift* volume which is a compendium of real if uneven merit, and which may be lost to architectural historians because it gets listed or shelved under Archaeology. *Studies in Scottish Antiquity* is a tribute to Stewart Cruden, who recently retired as Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments (and Historic Buildings) in Scotland. Of its nineteen essays, about half deal with architecture or buildings, or closely related matters. Two may be selected, a trifle invidiously perhaps, but they should convey both the flavour and standard of the parent work.

David Walker provides, at last, the background story of David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross, two architect-builder-scholars whose *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland* (5 vols) and *Ecclesiastical Architecture of Scotland* (3 vols) continue to stand out as (in Cruden's own words) "a corpus of national architecture which will probably never be equalled." I, and many others, have waited years for Mr Walker's splendid exposition of these two heroes. And Elizabeth Whitfield's "Victorian Mews in Edinburgh", with dates, plans, sketches, and descriptive catalogue, is a compact and original piece of research in the style of Sir Albert Richardson.

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[6] *The Viking Dig: The Excavations at York*. By RICHARD HALL. The Bodley Head, £12.50, paper £7.95.

[7] *The Archaeology of Medieval England*. By HELEN CLARKE. British Museum Publications, £12.95.

[8] *Studies in Scottish Antiquity presented to Stewart Cruden*. Edited by DAVID BREEZE. John Donald Publishers, £30.00.

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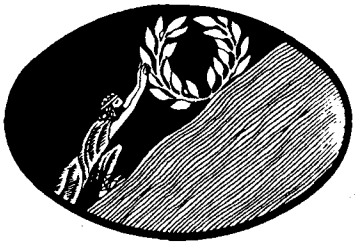
That is, and is meant to be, high praise. This *Festschrift* is for once both attractive to the well-rounded reader, and worthy of the well-rounded scholar it honours. An index, even a general one, would have been a help; it is notoriously difficult to find wide markets for works within this category, partly because of the tiresome and all too frequent omission of indices. But whether British archaeology, in the broad sense, strikes you as young and fresh, old and clapped-out, or just a little middle-aged, it's nice to see a regular injection of timeless learning.

History as Communication

Describers & Debaters—By ASA BRIGGS



HISTORIANS are notably impatient with each other. Herodotus mentioned Hecataeus four times, on each occasion only to criticise him. There are fewer debates between historians than combats, and where there are debates there are few shared rules. Reviews, too, can be very one-sided. It is left to historiographers to sort things out, and either by way of atonement or insurance most historians, particularly if they were brought up in Cambridge, respect historiography.

Yet there are problems there also, as Pieter Geyl pointed out in the first essay in his revealing *Debates with Historians* (1955). What now stands out in that essay is not Geyl's swipe at "the vehement one-sidedness" of a review in *The Times Literary Supplement*, but a highly telling critique of Lord Acton on Leopold von Ranke, "founder of professional history." For Acton, Ranke's work had been "unequalled as regards bulk" and, he felt it fair to add, "influence." Yet it was "colourless." "He decided effectually to repress the poet, the patriot, the . . . partisan . . . to banish himself from his books." Geyl, who from his own experience as a historian knew as much about combat as debate, would have none of that. "We do meet Ranke in his work, and the history which he has given us in his fifty volumes is no dry statement of facts without sense or intention. If that is what Acton meant to convey [note the unwanted caution in that if clause] it only proves that he had not understood Ranke."

In the light of such observations current talk of "the varieties of history", the title of an admirable book (1970) by Fritz Stern, sometimes rings a little hollow. Certainly some varieties are approved of more than others, and professional pluralism tends at best to be uneasy. In *The Pursuit of History*,[1] a book designed to help students of history through their initiation, John Tosh assembles many of the best recent statements about "what is history", including Richard Cobb's demand, not a new one, that the historian should, "above all, be endlessly inquisitive and prying, constantly attempting to force the privacy of others", and that his principal aim should be "to make the dead live." This seems, and indeed is, a long way from Keith Wrightson's approach to social history, also quoted by Tosh:

> "Society is a process. It is never static. Even its most apparently stable structures are the expression of an equilibrium between dynamic forces. For the social historian the most challenging of tasks is that of recapturing that process, while at the same time discussing long-term shifts in social organisation, in social relations and in the meanings and evaluations with which social relationships are infused."

It sounds nice when Mr Tosh, in a worthy effort to reconcile two such approaches, makes a general statement of his own (also, of course, not new) that:

> "history cannot be defined as either a humanity or a social science without denying a large part of its nature. The mistake that is so often made is to insist that history be categorised as one to the exclusion of the other. History is a hybrid discipline that . . . straddles the two."

Yet the word "hybrid" is awkward, and Mr Tosh, who has many supremely sensible and useful things to say in his book, does not seem too happy when he turns briefly to literature.

"It makes good sense", he writes, "to cite Chaucer as a spokesman for the attitudes of the fourteenth-century laity to abuses in the Church, or Dickens as evidence of the frame of mind in which middle-class Victorians considered the 'condition of England question'." If that is thought of "the use of literature", then there is surely something very wrong. R. H. Tawney, cited in many of the books under review, was far more perceptive when, after describing in a lecture how History and Literature were provinces presided over by Muses, he warned his hearers that "the enjoyment of great literature is an end, not a means; and only a barbarian would degrade its timeless truths to the status of materials for a humbler art."

Tawney, like G. M. Trevelyan, believed in history as communication. He wanted his hearers and his readers (not necessarily the same group) to know more about the past *both* for its own sake and for whatever relevances (not necessarily the same set of relevances) it might be thought to have for the

[1] *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*. By JOHN TOSH. Longman, £4.95.

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present. The last thing that he *wanted* to do was "to banish himself from his books", for he felt that this would be to banish his readers also. And Trevelyan, too, from the start—even more than Tawney—separated himself from professional historians who were interested only in talking to or fighting with other professional historians. In 1895, the year when Lord Salisbury appointed Acton as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, Trevelyan, who had already met him as a schoolboy, wrote:

> "I must act as interpreter of history, in its truest sense, to all those who can understand it, to those in fact who read books. I believe I am more fitted for that than for going further afield as a specialised digger."

BECAUSE MUCH HISTORY is written in plain language it can be accessible, and because there is, at least in Britain, a remarkably widespread interest in "the past", many historians—not all of them poets (or prophets)—have succeeded in attracting a large audience. Veronica Wedgwood is one, and whatever professional historians might say in 1984 she is perfectly entitled, if she chooses, to turn from the 17th century she knows so well to the history of the world which she knows less well, with a view to making world history more intelligible and more interesting to people who feel they know little about it.

The task is a formidable one, however, and so far she has only reached the year 1550. She admits that one of her reasons for embarking on *The Spoils of Time: A Short History of the World*[2] was her own "desire for wider knowledge", and there are signs of the intensity of effort required in such a quest in some of the chapters of the half-completed study. Like other would-be world historians, she does not find it easy to relate what was happening in one part of the world to what was happening in another. Yet she tries hard to establish unities as well as continuities and often succeeds in doing so, and she deals competently with "economic, social, intellectual and moral forces" as well as with individuals and events. Having chosen an evocative title for her book, it would have been more interesting, perhaps, had she chosen titles with content for her chapters: they are simply headed with time labels like "From the Beginnings to Circa 1500 B.C.", "Circa 900-1200" or "Circa 1200-1450." More discussion of different senses of time (including B.C./A.D.) would have given an extra dimension to the narrative. As it is, time simply marches on.

It should be added, however, that Dame Veronica states quite explicitly that her book is "essentially a narrative, not a philosophy of history", and it should be judged in these terms. Appropriately in the blurb on the back of the dust-jacket, therefore, there is a quotation from a critic in the *Daily Telegraph* who wrote of one of her previous books that "Miss Wedgwood is probably the best writer of historical narrative alive, and one can only marvel at the skill." Most critics would agree. Inevitably, however, in a world history it is extremely difficult to tell different stories in one, so that narrative is attenuated and turns instead into record. Moreover, although *The Spoils of Time* begins and ends with the idea of the earth as a planet, one possible way of leading through a single story, the end of the book is somewhat forced. Perhaps men in space in Volume II will provide the right eventual perspective. Columbus, of course, is already dead in Volume I, but America, where another recent historian of the world, Daniel Boorstin, began his voyage of discovery through time, is only briefly introduced. There were to be some strange transatlantic links in the future, links best known to travellers, like the curious link between Palaeologus and Barbados, but many of them, like this, were links of coincidence without functional significance. A travellers' history of the world—and Herodotus pointed the way—would be a different kind of book from that which Dame Veronica has chosen to write.

HISTORY AS NARRATIVE, whether of the world, a country or a place, is being taken increasingly seriously across the Atlantic and conferences of historians are now being devoted to it. What lies behind the narrative, of course, is of crucial importance in any historiographical judgment. Yet there is value in focusing on the narrative itself, in so far as narrative is directly related to communication. In this connection a third view of the role of history, quoted by Mr Tosh, is worth identifying. It was well put by Geoffrey Barraclough, who has never hesitated to cross centuries and continents. "Man", he wrote in 1955, "is a historical animal, with a deep sense of his own past [some men, many men, or man?]; and if he cannot integrate the past by a history explicit and true, he will integrate it by a history implicit and false." The historian should intervene essentially as a communicator.

This communication is an adequate reason in itself for historians to try to write books on long periods of history as well as short ones, and to be willing to learn themselves, as Dame Veronica says she has done, in the process. Mr Tosh, who is a specialist in African history, quotes a resolution carried by the International Conference of African historians meeting at Dar es Salaam in 1965, stating that "an African philosophy of history which would serve as a liberation from the colonial experience must be a vital concern of all historians studying in

[2] *The Spoils of Time: A Short History of the World. Vol. I: From Earliest Times to the 16th Century.* By C. V. WEDGWOOD. Collins, £15.00.

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Africa." Maybe, but less emphasis on a "philosophy" and more on a critical narrative would better fulfil Geoffrey Barraclough's sense of purpose, provided that there could then be communication between historians and hearers or readers. If there is not that communication (and it is not difficult to identify barriers to it), then there is bound to be false integration at almost every level of a society and culture. Indeed, the pursuit of history can never really start.

THE IMPORTANT NEW VOLUME *An Open Elite?*, by Professor and Mrs Stone,[3] tackles one familiar integrating hypothesis about English history, which they profess to be false. Theirs is not narrative history but problem-orientated history; the language is not always plain, the methodology includes quantitative analysis based on sampling, and there is a question-mark in the title.

The hypothesis has been that there is one particular feature which has distinguished English society from that of other countries in Europe since the 15th century:

> "the easy access of self-made men to power and status; and the harmonious intermingling with the landed interest, not only of successful public officials and lawyers, but also of men enriched by trade, speculation, what was high, and sometimes dubious finance, and even industrial entrepreneurship."

In other words, there has been "an open élite." As corollaries, it has also been claimed, four advantages have accrued to England. First, it acquired, with the possible exception of Holland, the most productive agricultural system in Europe. Second, it won the race to industrialisation. Third, it permitted, even encouraged, the development of a stable yet flexible political system. Fourth, by a twist, it accounted for England's more recent economic decline. Entrepreneurship withered as the sons of entrepreneurs—often entrepreneurs themselves—bought country houses and adopted gentrified life-styles.

The Stones set out in their book to test the main hypothesis by analysing it in the light of evidence derived from three very different countries—Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire, and Northumberland. They seek to show how the "country élite" (there was, in fact, more than one élite) has been composed in different periods, and how and to what extent new wealth infiltrated its ranks. Downward mobility, they note, requires a book of its own. Theirs concentrates on upward mobility from below and the consequent degree of turnover. Their conclusion is that as a result of their analysis "the paradigm of an open élite is dead"—the family statistics just do not support it. What many foreign observers as well as Englishmen took almost for granted, therefore, is a myth; and the main question that remains is why did it enjoy such longevity and ubiquity.

It is difficult at first reading to judge whether this main conclusion is as firmly established as the Stones claim. Three counties are not the whole of England, and though the three they chose were selected so as to offer "the greatest possible diversity of social experiences", it remains necessary to consider other counties: for example, Lancashire, Yorkshire, or Warwickshire. Moreover, there is an important assumption in the book which itself requires scrutiny—that the indispensable criterion for defining men of "landed élite status" is ownership of a country seat of a certain minimum size and aesthetic elegance. For the Stones, the distinction between a country house and a house in the country is fundamental. Finally, the hypothesis itself is set out in a form in which not all social historians would seek to frame it; and without access to any of the quantitative data which the Stones analyse there have already been vigorous debates between historians about the four so-called corollaries of the hypothesis. There has certainly been no agreement there.

THE WAY THE BOOK IS SET OUT is perhaps too tidy. The plan of it is economical and methodical—with chapter headings like "Strategies: Social Ideals and Demographic Constraints", "Transitions: Intra-Familial Inheritance", "Ruptures: Sellers and Drop-outs"; "Intrusions: Newcomers" and "Interactions: Land and Money." These are modern labels applied to old social phenomena, and there is much borrowing in the book from another Stone hypothesis—that concerning the evolution of affective attitudes within the family—that has not been without its critics. The term "possessive individualism" is taken for granted too, and there is an over-use of the term "crisis" which directly influences the use of the term "strategies."

[3] *An Open Elite? England 1540-1800.* By LAWRENCE STONE and JEANNE C. FAWTIER STONE. Oxford University Press, £24.00.

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Such language contrasts sharply with the language used by contemporaries, most of whom believed in what is now called the myth. Yet is is necessary to add that the Stones in these pages present as a part of their argument and not just as decoration a remarkably rich anthology of contemporary comment, much of it highly quotable. They genuinely succeed in doing what John Tosh wants as they introduce and assess literary evidence as effectively as demographic and other social data. There are some highly readable passages, too, which demonstrate that history need not be narrative history in order to appeal to a wide audience. There are fascinating sections, for example, on surrogate heirs and changes of name in landed families and on surname hyphenation, which began at a time when many family seats were passing to new owners through heiresses of ancient families during "the demographic crisis of the seventeenth century." As they rightly say, there was nothing "accidental" about this.

Finally—and it is more than a bonus—the Stones know how to use visual history. There are a hundred rewarding pages on country houses which once again draw on the widest possible range of evidence. Such history finds little place in Mr Tosh's book, although it is increasingly popular in schools, polytechnics and universities, and provides a new kind of communication. For him, his treatment of historical sources, as he himself acknowledges, is "in practice limited to verbal materials (both written and oral) because it is in this sphere that the claims of historians to special expertise lie." It is fortunate that this is no longer proving to be as generally true as it would have been twenty years ago, and the Stones point that way. They observe *en passant,* also, how "touring" country houses did not begin with the English Tourist Board. There was a difference, however. In the 18th century it was not landlords, like the 20th-century Lord Montagu, who led the way, but servants. Indeed, Arthur Young once stated that Wallington, Northumberland, was "the only place I have viewed, as a stranger, where no fees were taken."

In their last three pages the Stones turn briefly to what has happened since 1880. It would take too long to explain why the account they give there—in sharp contrast to the rest of their book—seems completely impressionistic. There could be another myth in the making if the argument were left to stand where they leave it.

TURNING FROM THESE BOOKS to *Justifying Historical Descriptions* by C. Behan McCullagh[4] is something of an anti-climax, although this may be merely to say that if historians are impatient with each other they may be even more impatient with philosophers of history. The purpose of Dr McCullagh's enquiry is "to discover the logical conditions under which people are justified in believing historical descriptions to be true." He is deliberately concerned with descriptions, and not with interpretations. Yet when he turns, for example, to "historical generalisations" he moves inexorably into questions of interpretation. He also includes a brief appendix on "truth and interpretation in history" which would doubtless make its way, along with his excellent bibliography, on to Mr Tosh's reading list.

For young historians seeking initiation, however, it would probably be more enlightening to compare and contrast the "varieties of history" expressed in Wedgwood on the one hand and the Stones on the other than to read about history and how it is written. Paradoxically, it is non-historians, particularly specialists in other disciplines, who will find the books about history most absorbing. And that raises other questions of communication.

[4] *Justifying Historical Descriptions.* By C. BEHAN MCCULLAGH. Cambridge University Press, £25.00, paper £7.95.

Poetry Doesn't Move

Poetry doesn't move—not at tenpence
and not at one penny: but the gold-lettered bookmarks
donated by Len are selling well.

Yesterday all was sunshine on the old
manor-house lawn. The Community Centre's annual Do
is, today, ill-fêted. We bring plastic sheeting in case. . . .

The Art is insipid, the Pottery rather rough,
the Flowers (*arranged*) are gasping. O Rose, thou art sick!
Have we seen the Soft Toys on the other side of the lawn?

I buy one, a copydexed Pretty with daffodil hair,
and muse the comparative use of verses and dolls.
Will my words wash? Will they last? Will they at least
give someone ephemeral pleasure? The sky is all mildew and doubt.
It drizzles. The wind flicks the leaves. . . .

Gerda Mayer

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Britain under Mrs Thatcher

By Robert Skidelsky

AFTER FIVE YEARS of Mrs Thatcher's rule it is still extraordinarily difficult to say whether her government has reversed or accelerated the decline of Britain. It has allowed the run-down of much of Britain's inherited industrial capacity, and it has challenged the main tenets of social wisdom by which Britain has lived since the War. Its critics see these things as leading to absolute decline and social disintegration; its supporters view them as a necessary policy of *reculer pour mieux sauter*.

One difficulty in talking about "Thatcherism" is that the technical language in which the Thatcher experiment has been defended and attacked (chiefly that of "monetarism") fails to capture the political vision which inspires, if not the whole government, at least its head. This is, basically, to restore pride and confidence to the British people, to put the "Great" back into Britain. Economic policy is a means to an end. Defeating the enemy in the Falklands War was as much part of Thatcherism as reducing the money supply in Threadneedle Street; as is a style of government which marks a deliberate break with the "deals in smoke-filled rooms" which passed for effective rule in the Wilson-Callaghan eras. National pride and individual self-respect are as important factors in efforts as the material incentives with which economics deals. Any assessment of the Thatcher years must take all these into account.

There is the further difficulty that Thatcherism is not unique to Britain though it takes milder forms elsewhere. In the United States and in most of non-Communist Europe there has been the very same decline of old industrial capacity; the same tendency for the state to withdraw from activist social and economic policy; the same attempt to evoke what Keynes once called "the ancient vein of Puritanism."

This raises a more general question. Are we living through a transition from one phase of political economy to another—comparable to the dismantling of the old mercantilist system at the end of the 18th and in the first half of the 19th centuries? And connected with this: what is the meaning of "the shift to the Right"—in ideas and politics—which has been taking place in the last ten years or so? Is it a futile attempt to halt "the decay of capitalism", as the Left believes? Or is it an adaptation to the challenges and needs of "the third industrial revolution"—one based on the new computer technology? Are the qualities (and casualties) of Thatcherism those of decadence, or of renewal?

How are we to judge these things? From the contemporary Keynesian standpoint Thatcherism is retrogressive: without continual and increasing state interventions (say the Keynesians) the economic juggernaut is bound to grind to a stop, with disastrous social consequences—and this has happened. At best the Thatcherites are "ignorant" or "stupid." At worst they are provoking unemployment and the run-down of the economy in order to "break the power of the trade unions." To the Thatcherites it is these very statist interventions which have made societies increasingly stagnant and ungovernable. At heart the issue here is one of political philosophy : is the state a positive good or a necessary evil, a stimulator or suppressor of individual energies? And connected with this : is economic progress a by-product of a régime of economic and political liberty, or does it have to be centrally willed and planned? The Keynesian position has its roots in the stagnation of the 1930s, the achievements of the War, and the 1950s-60s. The Thatcherite counter-revolution is a response to the decaying Keynesianism of the 1970s. There cannot be a final answer to such questions, for each age discloses its own possibilities, its own balance of forces, intellectual and spiritual, as well as material. It looks as if the collectivist tide is receding : time will tell.

MY AIM IS THREEFOLD: first, to explain the circumstances which gave rise to what is called "Thatcherism"; secondly, to give a brief analysis of Mrs Thatcher's economic experiment; thirdly, to sketch out the lines on which I think the experiment will proceed. The third section will be the briefest, as I do not want to give too many hostages to fortune.

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The End of an Intellectual Orthodoxy

THE THATCHERITE ANALYSIS of "the British disease" —in terms of a Danegeld state; a bloated, moribund, public sector; over-powerful trade unions—can be traced back to the last two years of Harold Wilson's second government (1968-70), though it became the public doctrine of the Conservative Party only when Mrs Thatcher became leader of the party in 1975. The crucial experience for Mrs Thatcher herself was undoubtedly Prime Minister Edward Heath's defeat by the striking miners in the winter of 1973-74. This was the second, and most calamitous, of three unsuccessful attempts—the others being Harold Wilson's in 1966-69 and James Callaghan's in 1976-79—to bind the trade unions to an Incomes Policy to restrain the rise in costs, each of which ended in the defeat of the government by the unions, a wages explosion, and the subsequent repudiation of the government by the electorate.

The basic lesson which the Thatcherites drew from these experiences was that the political cost of trying to run the economy by means of deals with the trade unions was too great. This in turn logically implied the abandonment of the "Full Employment" commitment, which had come to depend on an incomes policy. "Monetarism" provided the Thatcherites with the technical language to express a revised philosophy of government. In the new division of labour, governments fixed the rate of inflation through control of the money supply; the trade unions fixed the resulting (or "natural") rate of unemployment through the wage bargain—though it was recognised that this rate could be lowered by labour market reforms. With the unions rather than the government held responsible for unemployment, the rationale for budget deficits disappeared. Rather, the budget deficit (or the "Public Sector Borrowing Requirement", as it is rather euphemistically called in Britain) was seen as an important cause of the excessive growth of the money supply. This chimed in with the traditional Conservative dislike of the public sector. Reduction in the rate of growth of public spending would not only reduce inflation but enable a reduction in direct taxation which would improve the "supply-side" response of the economy through improved incentives and higher personal savings. It would also remove the threat to liberty implied by the continued expansion of the state. Implied in all this was a return to the ethic of individual responsibility and prudent housekeeping: the classical political and moral virtues.

The emergence of this philosophy was signposted by a number of key speeches and documents—notably Sir Keith Joseph's speech at Preston on 4 September 1974 and the policy document *The Right Approach to the Economy*, which appeared in 1977. The Conservative response was shaped not just by the decade's experience of British governments between 1969 and 1979 but by two other things. The first was the increasingly critical stance of intellectuals—economists, political scientists, historians—towards the role of the state. The second was developments on the Left of British politics which culminated in the formation of the Social Democratic Party at the beginning of 1981.

Unlike most of her predecessors Mrs Thatcher is unusually open to intellectual influences. The continued growth of the state, it was increasingly argued, posed a threat to liberty, democracy, morality, and efficiency, both directly and indirectly. The "reach" of government had grown too great for the health of society; the whole population was cosseted by a "nanny" state; while attempts to improve the government's "grasp" could only solidify authoritarianism. Britain's "New Right" offered not just a critique of the 20th-century state, but also a restatement of the tenets of classical liberalism and its supporting virtues.

LET ME TRY TO SET the issue in historical context. Until recently—in Britain at least—the expansion of the state was not regarded as part of the problem: it was regarded as the solution. In technical economic language, it would compensate for "market failures." This, in turn, was a pre-condition for the survival of a "free" society and a "free" economy. The paradox that increasing state interventions were a pre-condition of freedom and efficiency was never entirely happy. But it underlay the social-democratic/Keynesian consensus which has governed most of Europe since the Second World War. On the one hand there was a rejection of the idea that the economic juggernaut should be left free to grind out its results at whatever cost to the victims. On the other hand (and this since Keynes) we have no longer believed that the results it grinds out necessarily represent "progress." They are more likely to be stagnation and mass unemployment. The state steps in both to ensure progress and to protect the victims of progress. Potentially this is an almost limitless remit; but, as Maynard Keynes himself wrote to F. A. Hayek in 1944,

> "dangerous acts can be done safely in a community which thinks and feels rightly, which would be the way to hell if they were executed by those who think and feel wrongly."[1]

It was only in the 1970s that the opposite thesis started to gain significant ground—that state interventions create more problems than they solve, leading to increasing dysfunctions, which undermine the values which the interventions are designed to secure. An "ungovernability" thesis or a theory of the "overloaded" state was developed (in this country by political scientists such as Richard Rose and Anthony King[2]). Academics pointed out that the more responsibilities the state took on, the less effective (and less solvent) governments seemed to become. According to Anthony King, Britain was becoming harder to govern because:

[1] R. F. Harrod, *The Life of John Maynard Keynes* (1951), p. 437.

[2] See, especially, Anthony King, "The Problem of Overload" in *Why is Britain Becoming Harder to Govern?* (1976); and Richard Rose and Guy Peters, *Can Government Go Bankrupt?* (1979).

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> "the number of dependency relationships in which government is involved has increased substantially and because the incidence of non-compliance by other participants in these relationships has also increased substantially."

The ungovernability thesis challenged the central assumption of the statist liberals—that government interventions to compensate for market failure provide a protective belt for law and order, capitalism, private property, morality, etc. Rather they were seen as introducing lawlessness into the heart of the polity itself. "Corporatism", in other words, was the thin end of the wedge which led to authoritarianism.

The experience of the 1970s seemed to back this up. "Demand-management" to secure full employment increased the power of trade unions to push wages ahead of productivity. Incomes policies to secure wage restraint foundered on the "non-compliance" of the unions. Public ownership, designed in part to secure better industrial relations ("people's ownership"), simply involved the government directly as a "boss" in adversarial industrial disputes. Examples can be multiplied. Too often extension of state responsibility did not "solve" problems; it merely transferred them into the public sphere, where they undermined the ability of governments to govern. The New Right's answer to "ungovernability" was for the government to withdraw from commitments it could not keep in the prevailing conditions of consent; to confine itself to the provision of genuine public goods like defence, law and order, a sound currency, a few basic public services, and the relief of poverty through the taxation system—leaving everything else to voluntary provision.

A PARALLEL, and to some extent convergent, attack on the philosophy of the Big State was developed by the economic liberals. The narrow theoretical expression of this was "monetarism." The monetarists rejected the idea that governments could hit a target level of full employment by manipulating total spending. There was a "natural" rate of unemployment set chiefly by the forces determining the wage bargain. Any attempt to push unemployment below this "natural" rate by increasing spending will lead to accelerating inflation.

Interestingly, this drew on one strand of argument in Keynes's *General Theory*. Keynes distinguished between "voluntary" and "involuntary" unemployment. "Voluntary" unemployment arose as a result of

> "the refusal or inability of a unit of labour, as a result of legislation or social practices or of combination for collective bargaining or of slow response to change or of mere human obstinacy, to accept a reward corresponding to the value of the product attributable to its marginal efficiency."[3]

This implied a "natural" rate set by social institutions. Expansion of demand was designed to deal with the other type of unemployment, the "involuntary" or "demand-deficient" type. Milton Friedman did not claim that unemployment was always at its "natural" rate. It could be both above or below it—temporarily—depending on the monetary policy adopted. Monetary and budgetary policy should be designed not to offset temporary fluctuations of employment round its "natural" rate, as in Keynesian "fine-tuning", but to ensure a steady growth in the money supply compatible with a non-accelerating inflation rate of unemployment (NAIRU). Monetarists attributed the observed tendency for given rates of unemployment to be associated with even higher rates of inflation to the continuous attempts of "Keynesian" governments (contrary to Keynes's own teaching) to push down unemployment below its minimum sustainable rate. More generally, inflation was a purely monetary phenomenon "caused by governments printing too much money."

ECONOMIC LIBERALS came up with two types of explanation for the alleged tendency of governments to print too much money, sometimes combined in a single analysis. The first drew on the economic theory of democracy, originally suggested by Schumpeter, but developed by the Americans Anthony Downs, Gordon Tulloch, James Buchanan, Edward Tufte, etc. Democracy is seen by these analysts as a competitive vote-buying system. The politician is an entrepreneur in votes; the voter is a consumer of competitively marketed political merchandise. The consumer is sovereign in both the economic and political market-place; but in the latter, unlike the former, he is not subject to an individual budget constraint. As Samuel Brittan put it:

> "The costs of the handouts, whether met through taxation or inflation, will not necessarily accrue to the groups who benefit from them."[4]

Since spending programmes are popular, and the taxes to pay for them unpopular, a highly competitive political system has an inbuilt tendency to make inadequate budgetary provision for enlarging social expenditures. The result is inflation. Political competition is thus one major source of "excess demand."

The other is what Sam Brittan calls "the pursuit of group self-interest through coercive means in the market place"—particularly the conflict between trade unions and employers, or among trade unions themselves, for relative shares of the national product. In the absence of an accommodating monetary policy, this conflict yields a "natural" (or, in Keynes's language, "voluntary") rate of unemployment, depending on its intensity. But if this rate is too high for the given conditions of political consent, governments will attempt to lower it by financing any wage-rate yielded by producer group rivalry. (It was considered axiomatic to this analysis that no incomes policy would "stick" in a democracy, since no voluntary consensus on income distribution would be forthcoming.) This, then, is the second source of inflation.

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[3] J. M. Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (1973), p. 6.

[4] Samuel Brittan, "Can Democracy Manage an Economy?", in Robert Skidelsky, ed., *The End of the Keynesian Era* (1977), p. 45.

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The link between the two is the "excessive burden . . . placed on the 'sharing out' function of government."[5] Peter Jay, then the influential Economics Editor of *The Times*, thought that, given the dependence of democratic government on "renewable popular consent", inflation would probably accelerate until democracy was extinguished, since no government would survive the unemployment levels needed to weaken the power of the competing producer groups.[6]

WE CAN SEE HOW the two critiques of the reigning intellectual orthodoxy converged. The political scientists argued that in pursuit of elusive "social consensus" governments had created ungovernable societies. The economic liberals claimed that the only way governments could reconcile incompatible claims on the national product was by printing more and more money. The resulting witch's brew of accelerating inflation, rising unemployment, and producer group lawlessness would destroy a free economy and a free society. We can also see why monetarism offered an attractive way out. By concentrating on a single variable (the supply of money) which, it was claimed, was within its control, government could impose a central financial constraint on competing claims, without being held accountable for any particular employment outcome.

The first problem with this solution was to find a political constituency large enough to sustain a government committed to it. The conventional wisdom was that no such constituency was available, whatever the merits of the solution proffered. That it seems to have emerged in the last five years, and in a particularly relentless form, is due in part to the political disarray of the Left.

WE NEED TO DISTINGUISH HERE between the slow-moving, underlying shifts of opinion and circumstance undermining the Keynesian/Social Democratic vision and the specific strains these shifts imposed on the British Labour Party.

The growing failure of "corporatism"—which was the institutional form which would-be consensual government had taken by the 1970s—created not only a constituency for "the New Right" in the Conservative Party but also shifted an important section of the Labour Party towards "socialism in one country", with free markets and private ownership reduced to a residual. Indeed, once the problem was diagnosed as an excess of government reach over grasp, one possible solution was to extend the grab of the grasp.

On the Left this was interpreted to mean further injections of public ownership; additional controls on the private sector; import and currency controls; and an extension of "workers' control" in both the public and private sectors. The whole package was designed simultaneously to increase the state's legal control over the economy and to improve the conditions of consent by weakening the private sector and strengthening "participation." As Tony Benn put it in his Fabian Tract, *The New Politics* (1970):

> "Workers' control converts the existing negative power into positive and constructive power."

The growing influence of the Left within the Labour Party sharpened the Thatcherites' sense of mission and alarmed the Labour Party moderates without, however, suggesting to the latter an alternative governing philosophy. In retrospect, it can be seen that the start of "monetarism" and also the abandonment of the "full employment commitment" dates from the Callaghan-Healey government of 1976-79. But in the end Callaghan, like Heath and Wilson before him, staked his claim to govern on his ability to deliver trade-union agreement to wage restraint. The collapse of his "Social Contract" in 1978-79 (after some initial success) brought down his government and opened a civil war within the Labour Party which gave Mrs Thatcher a surprisingly easy political run in her first term.

Thus the first problem with the monetarist solution—to find a political constituency large enough to sustain a Prime Minister committed to it—was solved in both 1979 and 1983. The second problem—what would happen to society in the process—has yet to be conclusively answered.

Arguments, Pro et Contra

THERE ARE TWO MAIN VIEWS of Mrs Thatcher's experiment. These mainly follow Party lines, although there are Tory "wets" numbered among Mrs Thatcher's critics, and some in the Liberal-SDP Alliance would take a more balanced view of the government's record.

From a "Keynesian" standpoint—still that of the majority of British economists—Thatcherite macro-economic policy has been wrong in theory and disastrous in practice. The analytical critique focuses on the tenets of "monetarism" and, more broadly, on the deflationary impact of the government's fiscal policy. In its "Medium Term Financial Strategy" (MTFS), unveiled in Sir Geoffrey Howe's second Budget in March 1980, the government set targets for monetary growth in the four ensuing fiscal years: 7–11% in 1980–81, 6–10% in 1981-82, 5–9% in 1982-83, 4–8% in 1983-84. Thus the rate of growth of the money supply (£M3) was to be progressively reduced, largely through a progressive lowering of government expenditure (as measured by PSBR, the "Public Sector Borrowing Requirement"). This was supposed gradually to squeeze inflation out of the system, while encouraging a supply-side response from the private sector through greater incentives following the reduced taxation and lower interest rates which cuts in public spending would make possible.

[5] Samuel Brittan, *The Economic Consequences of Democracy* (1977), p. 248.

[6] Peter Jay, "How Inflation Threatens British Democracy with its Last Chance Before Extinction", *The Times* (London), 1 July 1974.

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It was assumed (or perhaps hoped) that the impact of this strategy on the "real" economy would be minimal. This was based on the belief that trade unions would adapt their wage demands to lower inflationary expectations, as well as to the imposition of strict cash limits in the public sector. There was no serious attempt made in the first phase of Thatcherism either to reduce the power of trade unions through changes in the law (James Prior, a prominent "wet", was Employment Secretary), or to reduce the size of the public sector (as opposed to its deficit) through "privatisation." (There were, to be sure, small sales of stock of public companies like British Petroleum, and much larger sales of local authority houses to tenants.) "Incomes Policy" was rejected on ideological as well as on practical grounds.

The government's disinflationary strategy ran into severe problems from the start. In the first place, it proved unable to control £M3, its chosen monetary variable. In each of the first three years this variable overshot its original target range, even though the base point was shifted upwards to accommodate the overshooting of the previous year. (In 1982, the target itself was revised.) Now the government sets targets for a number of different "moneys" (broad and narrow), and looks at other indicators as well. All this reflects the difficulty of defining "money", and of stopping agents from switching from one kind of money into another.[7] Since, in addition, the changes in the money supply bore no systematic relation to the changes in the inflation rate, serious doubt was cast on the validity of the postulated causal mechanism involved in the reduction of inflation.

Secondly, as is well known, squeezing inflation out of the British economy carried far heavier unemployment and output costs than the government anticipated, or than those suffered by most other developed countries.

> "The decline in industrial output between June 1979 and December 1980 was the fastest in recorded history. Industrial production fell by 14% while unemployment increased by two-thirds."[8]

In the four years 1979-1982, GDP fell by nearly 6% and manufacturing output by 20%. Unemployment in the same period rose from 5.4% to 12.2%—or, roughly, from 1.3 m. to 3.0 m. Since then there has been a modest recovery in GDP (which is still below its 1979 level), though none in manufacturing and employment. Inflation has come down from 10% in 1979 to 5% in 1984, a percentage decrease comparable with that achieved elsewhere. (The average OECD rate fell from 9.8% to 5.3% in the same period.)

DESPITE GAINS on the inflation front, this remains an appalling record by Keynesian standards; and the recovery prospects are not good. A recent Treasury forecast was for a growth in real GDP in 1984 of 3%, leaving unemployment at about 12.25%. The rate of inflation is not expected to fall. *Lloyds Bank Economic Bulletin* concluded in April 1984:

> "The UK economic recovery is likely to slow down this year as the consumer boom runs out of momentum. The rate of economic growth may fall to 1½% by 1986. . . . The Treasury's projected 2¼% rate of economic growth (average 1984-1988) will not be sufficient to prevent unemployment rising further. . . . Unemployment may peak at 14½% in 1988. . . ."

The unanticipated decline of the "real" economy jeopardised the government's aim of reducing the budget deficit as a prelude to further cuts in direct taxation, since revenues fall off in a slump, while transfer payments increase. Nevertheless, with the help of revenues from North Sea Oil, tax increases and spending cuts, the government was able to reduce the PSBR from 5.6% of GDP in 1980-81 to 2.7% in 1983-84. In fact the cyclically adjusted budget showed a surplus.[9] However, given the government's "Medium Term Financial Strategy", which assumes a close connection between the money supply and the PSBR, and the need for both to be progressively reduced, there was no room for the tax cuts the government considered essential to stimulate the real economy.

HOW AND WHY did the government's policy go awry? Partly this was because it was launched when the world economy went into a nose-dive following the second round of oil price "shocks" of 1979-81. (The price of OPEC oil rose from $12.5 a barrel in 1979 to $39 a barrel in January 1981.) Thus the government's disinflationary strategy was superimposed on a world deflation caused by the rise in energy prices which was not offset by Keynesian measures for fear of a repetition of the price explosions of the mid-1970s. Since Britain was already a substantial oil producer—we were producing by 1979 the equivalent of three-quarters of our total energy requirements—the effect of the oil price rise was to strengthen the pound against the currencies of large net oil importers, thus eroding the already weak international competitiveness of British industry.

External developments apart, Keynesians (and others) pointed to severe problems of intellectual coherence in government policy. Its initial decision to raise Value Added Tax from 8-15% (in order to compensate for the reduction in the standard rate of income tax from 33 pence to 30 pence in the pound and the top rate from 80% to 63%), as well as to implement the Clegg pay awards in the public sector and to free nationalised-industry prices, had the effect of adding several percentage points at a stroke to the retail price index. These were major strategic errors in the context of the battle against inflation. Earnings rose by 31% in the 18 months from June 1979 to December 1980; the retail price index from 10.3 to 21.9% in the first 12 months of the anti-inflationary régime.

[7] For details of the first three years, see W. H. Buiter and Marcus Miller, "Changing the Rules: Economic Consequences of the Thatcher Régime", *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 2 (1983), pp. 312-16.

[8] C. F. Pratten, "Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment", *Lloyds Bank Review*, January 1982, p. 40.

[9] Buiter and Miller, "Changing the Rules . . .", p. 327.

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The credibility of the anti-inflationary policy was severely weakened.

However, the biggest question-mark concerned the intellectual coherence of "monetarism" itself. In the first phase of "naive" monetarism, Mrs Thatcher and her economic advisers seem genuinely to have believed that the level of prices is determined by the supply of money, and that the supply of money is determined by the government. Hence, if one set annual monetary targets a little below the annual rate of inflation (which was 10% when the government took office), the rate of price increases would be progressively slowed till it reached zero. Provided the targets are believed and agents adjust their demands accordingly (especially for wages) there need be little effect on output and employment.[10] In practice, as we have seen, movements in the supply of money were not clearly correlated to changes in the retail price index; and the reduction in the rate of inflation was accompanied by an extremely heavy decline in output and employment. So how was the fall in the inflation rate actually achieved?

THE CRUCIAL QUESTION, as Nicholas Kaldor, the most persistent and effective British critic of monetarism, pointed out, is

> "whether, under a modern credit-money system, the changes in the so-called 'money supply' are the result of deliberate decisions by the monetary authorities . . . or whether they are merely a reflection of variations in loan expenditures, public or private, which the central bank influences only indirectly by changing the official rediscount rate and/or by open market operations."[11]

His conclusion is that it is the demand for loans which determines the supply of money, not the other way around. It follows that an anti-inflationary policy centred on reducing the money supply has to be brought about by means (higher interest rates, a higher exchange rate, cuts in public spending) which, on Keynesian principles, create depression and unemployment: i.e. a good old-fashioned deflation. Lord Kaldor and other critics on the Left are convinced that the government always intended this in order to weaken the power of the trade unions.

This is doubtful. The government's economic advisers assumed that if disinflationary policies were "properly announced and implemented" there would be minimal consequences for the "real" economy.[12] Nevertheless, it is true that the government were not *committed* to any particular employment outcome, since in the monetarist analysis it is the unions which determine the employment level through their wage bargains. The main criticism of the government from this point of view is that it failed to take steps to lower the "natural" rate by serious legislation on trade-union questions. The unions were free to use their monopolistic powers to "make the employment situation worse for any level of demand."[13] It is a fact that under Mrs Thatcher the trade unions have continued to push the real earnings of those in work ahead of both consumer prices and productivity gains. In the government's view they have "priced their members out of jobs."

HOW RESPONSIBILITY FOR the rise of British unemployment since 1979 over and above that attributable to the world recession is to be apportioned between the trade unions and Mrs Thatcher is ultimately a matter of political and moral conviction. In the Keynesian division of labour, unions fix the rate of inflation, governments the level of employment. The monetarists, as we have seen, reverse this. Neither view can be falsified, for each can be rescued in face of adverse evidence by introducing additional assumptions. A commonsense view would attribute part of the rise to a rise in the "natural" rate, and part of it to "Keynesianism in reverse" (i.e. contractionary budgets which reduced the level of demand).

But even if the major part in the self-induced rise in British unemployment is blamed on "Keynesianism in reverse", rather than on trade-union intransigence, the government can reply (though it has not done so) that, given the social institutions, no lower price could be paid for squeezing inflationary expectations out of the system. The weakness of Mrs Thatcher's critics is that their own disinflationary strategies all call for incomes policies, which have always broken down after a year or two, whichever party tried them. Thus Nicholas Kaldor said in the House of Lords (27 November 1980):

> ". . . I regard our present situation as a very good one for getting rid of inflation, and to do so fairly speedily and fairly painlessly—if only our Ministers possessed the necessary knowhow, which I fear they do not. . . . I would suggest something like a 6% average pay limit extended over the economy as a whole . . . enforced by statute if necessary. . . . I would accompany it with a guarantee of a sufficient fall in the cost of living through a cut in indirect taxes and the introduction of subsidies on essential goods, as we had in wartime, in order to guarantee a small but steady improvement in real wages. . . . That would bring inflation to an end in a very short time."[14]

The consensual assumption behind this statement, as also its roots in the wartime spirit of national unity, is clear. The truth is that such plans had lost all credibility with the British electorate, and Mrs Thatcher realised it.[15]

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[10] See the evidence of Milton Friedman, David Laidler, and Patrick Minford to the House of Commons Treasury and Civil Service Committee, *Memoranda on Monetary Policy* (HMSO, 1980), pp. 51, 61, 142.

[11] Nicholas Kaldor and J. A. Trevithick, "A Keynesian Perspective on Money", *Lloyds Bank Review*, January 1981, p. 6.

[12] Patrick Minford, *Memoranda on Monetary Policy* (1980), p. 142.

[13] William Keegan, *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment* (1984), pp. 114-115.

[14] Reprinted in Nicholas Kaldor, *The Economic Consequences of Mrs Thatcher* (1983), p. 67.

[15] It is, nevertheless, an interesting question *why* incomes policies have failed so consistently in Britain, whereas they have been relatively successful over long periods of time in countries like Austria, Sweden and Holland.

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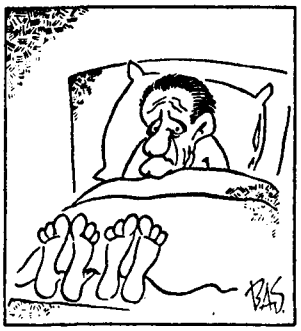
Of Credits & Debits



HOW ARE WE TO ASSESS the balance sheet and future prospects? Mrs Thatcher's government is the first British government for twenty years to have developed a credible—i.e. politically sustainable—anti-inflationary policy. She has done this by dropping the commitment to full employment. Up to the 1970s it was widely assumed that democracy could not stand mass unemployment. Mrs Thatcher has disproved this. In doing so, she has undermined much of the analysis which underlay "the political economy of inflation." In this, inflation was explained sociologically as arising from incompatible group demands on the national product.[16] This led logically to pay policy to achieve "consensus" on income distribution.

Mrs Thatcher has shown that there is a less politically debilitating way. The role of "monetarism" was to give the government the courage to try the experiment. The results were unfavourable to monetarism but vindicated Mrs Thatcher politically. The demonstration is bound to have a profound effect on future British and foreign governments. The hubristic Keynesianism of the 1950s and 1960s is dead. There is a prospect of "sound money" again, and with it a return to a fixed exchange rate system. In these ways Mrs Thatcher has made her mark on her times.

It is often suggested that Mrs Thatcher's achievement depends on keeping the British economy "depressed." A return to fuller employment, it is said, will revive trade-union power and wage pressure, forcing government to choose between monetary accommodation and higher unemployment. This surely depends on how the improvement in employment comes about. If it does so as a result of a fall in the "natural" rate of unemployment, there will be no inflationary consequences.

Thus the logic of "Phase II Thatcherism" is to bring about a fall in the "natural" rate by improving the supply side of the economy, particularly the working of labour markets. The government is committed to a programme of "privatisation." This is a term which covers (*a*) selling a majority interest in commercial activities of the public sector (e.g. British Telecom); (*b*) opening up the public sector to competition from private firms (e.g. licensing Mercury to use the British Telecom network); (*c*) "contracting out" many local services (e.g. garbage collection) to private firms. The aims of the programme are threefold: to reduce the "Public Sector Borrowing Requirement"; to get governments out of industrial disputes; and to replace the open-ended purse with the disciplines of the market. As a public-sector employer the government is inherently involved in every public-sector dispute. It can either pay up, which destroys the credibility of its anti-inflationary policy—or it can refuse to pay, and appear heartless. The current miners' dispute is a good illustration of the problem. Mrs Thatcher has refused to intervene and alluded to Prime Minister Wilson's late-night negotiating sessions in Downing Street—"Beer and sandwiches at No. 10? Never." Yet the strike is clearly a strike against the government, and the government has to take the heat. Privatisation is a way of getting the government out of as much of this business as is politically possible.

In the longer term it is possible that trade-union power will shrink naturally through the re-employment of labour in non-unionised or weakly unionised activities. A letter to *The Guardian* on 12 June 1984 asks: "Why is it assumed that a couple of miners with a total of thirty thousand pounds (their redundancy payments) in their pockets could not find some form of self-employment?" It is hard to tell how many potential jobs there are outside the declining or heavily unionised sectors. There is much talk of the new "sunrise industries", but certainly there is nothing like the *new* job creation which has been taking place in the United States, and movement from job to job is still negligible in this country as compared with America. Nevertheless, it may be that much of the post-War discussion of "cost-push" inflation, which assumed an economy dominated by the big battalions of capital and labour, is about to be made obsolete by the shift towards computerised manufacturing as well as to small-scale service enterprise. If this is so, the class struggle will not be solved, but simply (as often in the past) by-passed.

IF FULLER EMPLOYMENT is brought about by hydraulic Keynesianism of the old type, governments will be forced once again to tread the unrewarding path of incomes policy. But I am persuaded that no British government will embark on this route in the foreseeable future. It is strewn with too many political casualties. On the other hand, by knocking inflationary expectations out of the system this government has re-opened the possibility of a more modest use of Keynesian policy in the future. Governments are unlikely to forgo the use of these powerful tools forever; or electorates to tolerate indefinitely very high levels of unemployment, even at low rates of inflation. The present situation, with *stable* rates of both inflation and unemployment, might seem ideal for a gradual, modest reflation of the economy, though it is doubtful that this government will attempt it.

Whether the costs of the anti-inflationary policy were necessary is a matter of judgment. What is undeniable is that the British economy is still deeply depressed and is likely to remain so for a long time. Within the budget constraints set by the "Medium Term Financial Strategy", the government's problem is clear. If the PSBR is to be further restricted and room found for tax cuts at the present depressed levels of revenue, public spending will have to fall further in real terms. This means an assault on the greatest of the British "sacred cows"—the Welfare State. The Government has for long discussed this possibility, but the political consequences were felt to be too damaging to contemplate.

Mrs Thatcher's second term promises to be much more difficult than her first. As the spending cuts become surgical rather than cosmetic, as specific monopolies, vested interests,

[16] For example, see Fred Hirsch and J. Goldthorpe, eds., *The Political Economy of Inflation* (1978).

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and restrictive practices come under attack, opposition will surely grow. It has already started. The Government (or its delegates) is currently engaged in difficult and exhausting battles with the miners and with local councils whose expenditure it is trying to reduce.

The Opposition parties are fighting back more effectively than they did in the Government's first term of office. There are growing signs of restiveness among its own supporters (particularly in connection with its plans to "cap" rates and abolish the Greater London Council). There has been a succession of "banana skins" (the cliché of the year) which suggest that the Prime Minister's touch, or perhaps footing, is becoming less sure. The question with which this article began is about to be squarely posed: has governing the country in Mrs Thatcher's style improved its governability, or will it turn out to have diminished it? Will Mrs Thatcher scatter her foes once more, or will she be laid low by the forces she has raised up against her? The next year or so will provide the answer.

The issue is much more finely balanced than is sometimes realised by those who see only the size of the government's Parliamentary majority. Mrs Thatcher has given many a renewed sense of pride in being British. Against much disagreeable evidence, they feel their society is starting to "work" again after the shambles of the 1970s. Against this, it must be said that provision for the poor has deteriorated. And there has been a build-up of bitterness, even hatred, against "the Iron Lady" which is dangerous for her government and for the health and stability of our politics.

Part of the problem lies in the quality and style of this government, which is inadequate to the tasks it has set itself. A number of key Ministers are duds; the Civil Service is demoralised: hence the spate of leaks. Mrs Thatcher herself is not an unfeeling person, but she often gives the impression of being one. She has a powerful vision of a new Britain, but gives no impression of intellectual grandeur, such as de Gaulle was able to convey. Nor has she yet taken any major steps to reform the institutions which prevent the emergence of a more dynamic economy, such as the great reforming governments of the early 19th century managed to achieve. Keynes used to accuse Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s of mixing up recovery with reform. Today one feels that recovery will not come without reform; and unless Mrs Thatcher grasps the nettle of reform, all the cost and suffering will have been in vain. This is the challenge of her second term.

Scene from the Fifties

The three-year-old who will not go to bed
Tugs Gunga's tail, and Gunga patiently
Permits him to, because he understands.
An animal *knows* when it is children.

Eight o'clock now, in the drawing-room
Of a house of proconsular maxims, built
In Hampshire, in memory of the hills;
The lights of the town could be any town's.

She can no longer see to write, or hear
To think, so the elderly lady
Turns on the light above the wicker chair,
And licks her letter down, and turns to watch.

Watching her grandchild and the darkening fields,
She thinks: *He knows, he knows*: inside the cat
Is a small child psychotherapist resolving
To stay where he is; it makes things easier.

The mould of things seems perfectly secure:
The animals can tell when it is men;
The old man in the bedroom winds up the clock
Which tells him the time it is in Simla;

The daughter in the kitchen daintily
Prepares an England to receive them all;
The pile of 45s in Mary's room
Is not seen as something doing any harm.

Alan Brownjohn

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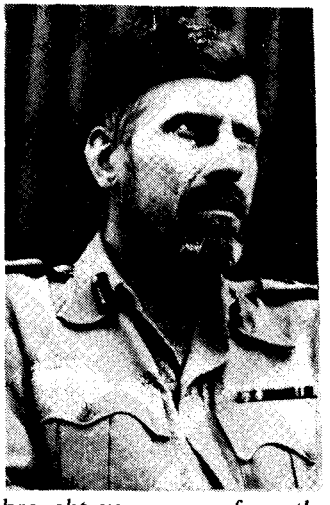
MEMOIR

Wingate in Palestine

By T. R. Fyvel



WHY SHOULD the memory of the British guerrilla commander of World War II, Major-General Orde Wingate, have remained so much more alive in Israel, where a series of villages and forests are named after him, by contrast with Britain where, apart from the survivors among the men he led, he is remembered only by a few military experts? In Israel's history, the Wingate legend has a very special place. Back in Palestine in 1938, Wingate brought young men from the Jewish underground defence force, the *Hagana*, into his famous "Night Squads" to counter-attack Arab rebels, teaching them the role of audacity in attack. Under his leadership a vital first link in the development of pacifist Jews into Israeli soldiers clicked into place. Flavius Josephus would soon have recognised the warriors of the ancient Jewish wars of antiquity.

But as for Wingate's British reputation—true, in 1940 Wingate led his "Gideon Force" of British-officered guerrillas (with the Emperor Haile Selassie in train) in triumphant battles against the Italians in Ethiopia. In 1943 in Burma, he led the 3,000 selected British soldiers of his Chindit force in an exhausting but celebrated long march through the jungle behind the Japanese lines. In 1944 he had just started his second airborne Chindit campaign when he was killed in an air crash at the age of forty-one. But in an era of post-War British imperial withdrawal, neither the Ethiopian mountains nor the Burmese jungles were to have any further part in Britain's story; and Wingate's feats have faded with the history of the War. For all the efforts of his loyal friends, Wingate, whom at his death Churchill described as "perhaps a man of destiny", left little of a real British legacy behind.

And yet he was a genius, incomplete, flawed perhaps, but a genius, with whom a fortunate accident placed me in contact at the very start of his extraordinary career. I was in Palestine in 1937, trying to write a book on the British-Arab-Jewish conflict. By 1937 it seemed clear that, to safeguard its Arab Middle East interests, the British Government was seeking to terminate its historic link with the Balfour Declaration for a "Jewish National Home" in Palestine. If this coincided with Hitler's creation of a vast tide of Jewish refugees, that was unfortunate but irrelevant—one could see the cold Foreign Office logic. (Equally, the British administrators seeking to govern an Arab-Jewish Palestine on the usual colonial pattern found themselves to a man at odds with the Palestine Jews who tried abrasively to govern themselves.)

Reacting to Jewish mass immigration from Europe, the Palestine Arabs had indeed in 1936 begun a minor on-and-off revolt in which "Arab bands", as they were then called, attacked Jewish settlements and British convoys and the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline. From the Jewish viewpoint one could live with this—no Jewish settlement was ever yielded; but the largish British garrison, held back by the Administration, seemed unusually slow to put down the sporadic Arab revolt.

THIS THEN, WAS the situation when a Jewish political friend asked me to meet a new British Intelligence officer, one Captain Orde Wingate, whom he described as, astonishingly, not only pro-Jewish but pro-Zionist. I remember this first encounter. Wingate's flat in the suburb of Talbieh in Jerusalem gave a view on to the sunny Old City, but inside everything was solidly English. There was the soft-treading Arab servant; the static group photographs of solemn British officers on the walls; and a shelf full of silver cups, point-to-point trophies which were displayed if Wingate wanted to impress English visitors. He was of middle height, with deep-set, remarkably piercing blue eyes, a strong chin and a somewhat wolfish smile. From the start he seemed to me to speak with that imperious confidence of having behind him in his family five generations of British soldiers successfully bestriding the world. His young wife Lorna, a delicate Scottish beauty, echoed his assurance. The previous evening, she reported, they had been invited to dinner by a senior member of the Administration. Finding the Nazi-German Minister present, they had turned their backs. "Come, Lorna, this is no place for us", Wingate had said.

I wondered then, and still do: did Captain Wingate know how far he could go? He clearly had no doubt. On the troopship bringing him to Palestine, he told me, he had as an Arab expert from the Sudan been asked to give the assembled officers his view of the Palestine situation. He had told them that the Arab (in the singular) could be a man of great charm. with an attractive way of life; but of course he was no fighting man. The only serious military support Britain could rely on in Palestine rested with those Jewish settlers they might otherwise find bizarre. Wingate said that because his speech went against conventional Army wisdom, it made no impression whatever on the officers. "My words were just noise."

Wingate confessed that on arrival he knew little about the Palestine conflict, but by now he had studied the whole lay of the land, had stayed as a friendly guest in several *kibbutzim*—the Jewish collective villages—and had assessed the fortitude of the young Jewish settlers. He said that the British failure to put down the marauding Arab rebels arose from not recognising their unchanging tactics. An Arab band, firing

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from both sides of the road, would ambush a British convoy in the hills. The convoy would halt and from a defensive position fire back without much damage to either side while radioing for air support. But by the time the aircraft arrived, the Arab band had safely stolen away; the convoy would resume its way; the officers would be in time for evening drinks; and the Arab band, reassembled, would stage a similar ambush a week later.

By contrast, Wingate claimed, he knew precisely how to eliminate the Arab bands with the minimum of casualties; and he had submitted a scheme for a small force to do this in which he wanted to have young Jews from the *kibbutzim* fighting alongside British soldiers. Well, I thought that such legal arming of Jews was something the Palestine government was bound to reject. However, to my question how his own superiors—from General Wavell downwards—regarded his scheme, Wingate answered confidently that he was not in the least worried about airing his pro-Jewish views so publicly. After all, his scheme fitted into his whole prophetic forecast of the coming great war against Hitler in which he held it to be Britain's duty to side with the persecuted Jews.

As I fell under Wingate's spell, I tried to find clues to his almost Biblical interest in persecuted Jews. True, his parents, converts to the extreme Protestant faith of the Plymouth Brethren, had brought up their children on strict Old Testament principles—perhaps this helped him to regard himself as one of the elect few who knew the truth. He said that as a solitary and—evidently—embattled day boy at a well-known boarding school, and later at the Royal Military Academy, he had been made to feel an unpopular outsider and that this made him sympathise with the Jews whom Hitler had stamped as outcasts. As a young officer in the Sudan he had watched Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia and dreamed of vengeance; and indeed, to prepare himself for the coming world war, no less, he had been on long camel rides across the Western desert and had written revolutionary papers on desert warfare. All this, I felt, might throw light on his politics; his constant tension might explain his eccentricities and his occasional hot rages. But the mystery that remained was that of his relentless visionary drive.[1]

ALL THIS WAS astonishing stuff to hear from a mere British captain in Palestine in 1937; but during our next few meetings I discovered something else. Wingate was unlike anyone else I knew in Palestine in that he totally disregarded well-established opinions with which he even slightly disagreed. On every conceivable subject he seemed to have thought out the matter carefully for himself, to arrive at the dogmatic and occasionally eccentric views he liked to voice in what was often uninterrupted monologue from on high. He was passionate, above all, about what he called "decent British war aims" in the conflict to come. Christopher Sykes, in his biography of Wingate, quotes a letter he wrote at this time to his cousin, the former Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian forces, Sir Reginald Wingate, which he ended: "We are in for a war sooner or later . . . for pity's sake let us do something just and honourable before it comes. Let us redeem our promises to Jewry and shame the devil of Nazism, Fascism and our own prejudices."

AND WHAT OF THE ARABS? Wingate declared that he was far from being anti-Arab; he had ideas about a future Arab Middle East free from all British and French rule. But at this time he was completely taken up by his demand to organise special "Night Squads" of a hundred or so British soldiers and an equal number of young Jews whom he would train to go out at night in order to eliminate the Arab bands. He seemed quite fearless in his lobbying. Once, by-passing his military superiors, he placed himself on the Jerusalem road, arm outstretched, to stop the car of his Commander-in-Chief, General Wavell. On being invited into the car, he passionately argued the case for his special force, to gain a cautious recommendation from Wavell, who seemed curious about this strange captain. By the late spring of 1938, although Wavell had departed, Wingate was training his first men for the "Night Squads."

But before this, he had to persuade the highly suspicious Jewish leader of the *Hagana*, the underground defence force, to let him, as a British officer, have their men; and, as I knew, this involved conflicting policies and ideals. By the end of 1937, *Hagana* policy towards Arab attackers was still that of *havlaga* —or self-restraint; that is, their men resolutely defended the Jewish settlements, never counter-attacked outside them and never took reprisals. This purely defensive stand was partly due to fear of British seizure of their arms, but in the main it sprang from the long pacifist tradition of the Jewish socialists then dominant in Palestine. Wingate would have none of this. He asserted fiercely that to the British military mind, such self-restraint looked only like the typical and derided Jewish passivity in combat. He talked wildly (as it then still seemed) of a possible mass slaughter of Jews in Europe. He said that, living as they did under the Nazi threat, the Jews must learn to fight for their lives.

Before his compelling eloquence, *Hagana* resistance was also overborne. There occurred a historic incident at Kibbutz Hanita, high up in the mountains on the Lebanese frontier, where Wingate for the first time boldly led the defenders out

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[1] One young British RAF officer, who served with him in Burma in 1943, just before his fatal air crash, has recently recalled:

> "Friends enthused about his military genius, his power to inspire, the aura of his personality; but without disputing these tributes I have to say my own immediate reaction to his name is the vision of a messianic figure, one remote from ordinary human concerns. He lacked a common humanity. Difficult to imagine Wingate shedding a tear over a dead comrade, difficult indeed to think of the very word 'comrade' in his context. He inspired men to action, not to affection. . . ."

Terence O'Brien goes on to record in a similar critical vein in his book called *Out of the Blue*, just published by Collins, that:

> "Wingate looked at you like the Ancient Mariner, 'long grey beard and glittering eye', sensing you if at all not as a fellow man but a tool to be wielded in some God-given mission. Why risk your life for such an egocentric visionary? Or even do him a favour?
>
> Certainly he could arouse a fervent belief in his leadership. When he addressed us at a cinema that winter, telling of pain to be suffered and glory to be won in 'his' campaign, the officers came out with shining eyes, transformed into excited crusaders. . . ."

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on an aggressive night patrol to seek out and ambush their attackers. In the retrospect of British policies this seems extraordinary: but by June 1938, Wingate was successfully defending the pipeline of the Iraq Petroleum Company, and netting Arab prisoners with his Night Squads, whose Jewish members included the future Israeli general Moshe Dayan.

Before this, I had an unforgettable conversation with Wingate. Not long after Hitler's seizure of Austria, I drove with him into Transjordan and I remember how on the way back we stopped and walked along the banks of the Jordan where the rushes grew tall and Wingate held forth as usual, this time about how he saw the course of the coming war.

He said that the Germans could break through the Maginot line at Sedan at any moment they chose. France, corrupted, would collapse; Fascist Italy would pounce on Egypt. Then Britain, alone, would have to contain the Axis powers from her fortified island, and he had worked out how Palestine could be held, until the Russians and the Americans could pile in. (Later I often thought how correct his scenario was, except that he underestimated Mussolini's inefficiency in failing to seize Egypt.) As we walked along the Jordan, Wingate went on to proclaim his own three "War Aims" for Britain: a British-led Jewish army in Palestine; the liberation of Ethiopia from Italian Fascism; and a British alliance with China against the Japanese invaders. And Captain Wingate, he firmly predicted, would play a part in all three aims—as indeed he was to do. He asked about my book on Palestine, for whose publication I was soon returning to London. When I said that I had written chapters belabouring the British, the Zionist, and the Arab leaders alike, he was not particularly interested. He said that in London I should organise discussions about "decent British war aims" and write about this; and so profound was his spell that this was precisely what I did for two years.

In London that late summer I heard that Wingate with his Night Squads in Galilee was, in methodical small-scale operations, eliminating the Arab bands and that he had been lightly wounded. But this seemed a small matter compared to the world-shaking drama of Hitler and Czechoslovakia, and Neville Chamberlain's surrender, which one had witnessed. Then Wingate was in London on leave, and again everything seemed possible. He found immediate access to the great. He had a respectful hearing from Churchill on his project of a Palestine-Jewish army. To the intense anger of his military superiors in Palestine, as a serving officer he also harangued the Colonial Secretary, Malcolm MacDonald, on the same subject.

I saw Wingate again in London in 1939 after the expected reaction: his enemies in Palestine had struck back; his Night Squads were disbanded; he himself was barred from Palestine, as it turned out, for ever. What followed was the further acts in the strange, dramatic Wingate story: Wingate leading his "Gideon Force" guerrillas in Ethiopia; his suicide attempt in Cairo and his rehabilitation; Wingate's first Chindit campaign against the Japanese, then his second; and his untimely accidental death. A Wingate legend bloomed and faded. Of all the events I heard directly from him, it is the memory of Wingate in Palestine, where his career first took off, which has stayed in my mind.

Last summer, in a deeply troubled and divided Israel, I talked to two former members of his Night Squads, today both elderly Israeli colonels.

Colonel Irmiyah, who had just published a book fiercely attacking the Israeli conduct of the Lebanon war, said: "Wingate changed my life." He had been a young *Hagana* man in Kibbutz Hanita on that famous first occasion when Wingate led them out into the night on counter-attack. Wingate always led his patrol from the front, said Irmiyah, a trait which has marked Israeli officers to this day. In the Night Squad, Irmiyah had stood beside Wingate when he was wounded by a stray bullet. Wingate had angrily pushed his helping hand aside, staggered to sit down on a stone, and while bleeding had tried to go on giving combat orders. One can only wonder whether Wingate, sitting wounded in the deep night of Galilee, feared that a bullet in this petty engagement had put an end to all his ambitions.

Irmiyah's friend, Colonel Levakov, had in his time commanded a company of Druze soldiers in the Israeli army. Earlier, in 1938, he had been one of Wingate's sergeants in the Night Squads. He recalled Wingate on patrol as carrying a pistol, wire-cutters, a grenade—and a Bible. He remembered Wingate's precise lectures.

> "To us he would say: 'Never go out without British soldiers—so that the government can't come down on you.' To the British soldiers he said: 'Never go out without *Hagana* men who know the country—without them you will be lost.' To the Arab villagers he said: 'I am no ordinary British officer—so listen to my words, and not to those of the rebels, and you will be undisturbed.' Again, to us in his squad he said: 'Remember, your comrades of the Ulsters and the West Kents will soon be gone but you will always live here and you will have to build good relations with your Arab neighbours.'. . ."

"And then", said Colonel Levakov reminiscently, "then he would read to us again from the Bible."

Long, long ago. In my mind I tried to picture Wingate conducting small-scale warfare in his own special style in Galilee, while driven on by his prophetic visions of Britain's certain cataclysmic war against Hitler in which he would play his part, and of a Jewish state arising with an efficient army alongside its neighbours. Who can know what the secret was of his extraordinary drive? But as I have thought about it over the years, it seemed to me that Wingate's life had its pattern: whether in leading his Night Squads in Palestine, then his "Gideon Force" guerrillas in Ethiopia and his Chindits in Burma. Already in Palestine, back in 1938, he had with a touch of genius shaped his life to it. The picture was always that of Wingate marching at the head of a small band of the elect against the powers of darkness. He was a warrior out of the oldest books of the Bible.

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INTERVIEW

Prison Gates & Plain Speaking

ADAM MICHNIK *interviewed by* TIMOTHY GARTON ASH

PUBLIC OPINION *in Poland and the West has been shocked by the kidnapping and murder of Father Jerzy Popieluszko. What are your feelings? What conclusions do you draw?*

MICHNIK: Well, you know, I'm stunned by it, like everyone in Poland. It's so at odds with the Polish tradition, so extraordinary, at once so outrageous and so bestial, that it's really difficult to find words for our feelings. There's profound revulsion at this atrocity, and there's the horror which comes from thinking about the kind of people who could commit such a crime. I have the impression that what Fyodor Dostoevsky described in *The Devils* pales by comparison with the devils at work here. And I believe—I'm not alone in this—that to some extent we are *all* responsible for this terrible murder. It was preceded by a campaign of repression and harassment against Father Jerzy, and by earlier attempts on his life. And we all kept silent. When we talked with friends after reading the baiting article by "Jan Rem"—that's Jerzy Urban's pseudonym[1]—really we reacted only with irony and disgust at the author of that piece. None of us had sufficient imagination to see in that article a portent of murder. If I had had more imagination, and had publicly accused Urban of incitement to murder, I might have been sentenced for slandering a Minister, but Father Jerzy might still be alive. The lesson I have learned is that in the face of such a campaign of hatred we must not keep silent—and certainly I will no longer be silent.

ADAM MICHNIK, *historian, essayist, and a leading figure in Poland's democratic opposition for the last fifteen years, needs no introduction to readers of* ENCOUNTER, *who will recall his "Open Letter" to General Kiszczak (May 1984) and his article "From a Polish Prison" (December 1983). This is the first major interview he has given since his release, together with other* KOR *and Solidarity leaders—"the Eleven"—following the July 1984 amnesty. A volume of his essays will be published in English by the University of California Press next year.*

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH *is the author of "The Polish Revolution: Solidarity" (Cape, London; Scribner's, New York) which won the 1984 Somerset Maugham Award.*

—But you wouldn't say that the Jaruzelski government is directly responsible for the murder?

MICHNIK: It *is* directly responsible, at least in the sense that it has taught Security Service functionaries [the secret police] to believe that they can murder with impunity. In the last ten or fifteen years not a single member of the Security Service has been brought to court for violence against a citizen, if that citizen was an opponent of the régime.

—The case of Grzegorz Przemyk, for example, the Warsaw schoolboy who died after being beaten up in police custody. . . .

MICHNIK: Well, that's an extreme example. The judges who cleared the murderers of Przemyk have the blood of Father Jerzy on their hands today. I've no doubt about that. But this is far from being the only case. No one was brought to court for the shooting of the workers on the Baltic coast in December 1970. No one was brought to court for the so-called "paths of health" in Radom in 1976. No one was brought to court for the killing of the miners at the Wujek colliery. No one was brought to court for the death of the Nowa Huta worker, Bogdan Wlosik, or for those who died in Lubin.[2] And together this makes a coherent picture: these people felt they could kill with impunity.

—Is it possible now to foresee the consequences of Father Popieluszko's tragic death?

MICHNIK: No, they're impossible to predict. It's certainly the deepest shock since the thirteenth of December. I can't compare it with anything else. But just because the shock is so profound, the popular reaction might take different forms. In

[1] Jerzy Urban is Government spokesman, with the rank of Minister. The article by "Jan Rem", which sharply attacked Father Popieluszko, appeared in the Warsaw weekly *Tu i Teraz*.

[2] Workers who protested against food price-rises in June 1976 were forced to run the gauntlet through two lines of truncheon-wielding police who called this, with delicate irony, "the path of health." The Wujek miners were shot by security forces at the beginning of the "state of war" on 13 December 1981. Nowa Huta is the mammoth steel-works near Krakow, where riot police have repeatedly clashed with protesting workers. Demonstrators in the town of Lubin were shot by the police.

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the same way, it was impossible to foresee exactly what the consequences would be of the Radom events in 1976, for example—but today we know that the first result was the formation of the Movement for the Defence of Civil Rights, the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR), and other independent institutions, and in the end the events of August 1980. So although it's impossible at the moment to foresee precisely what will result from this, one thing is clear to me: everyone, even the most sceptical, has understood that in Poland today there is nothing more urgent than putting an end to the banditry organised by functionaries of the Security Service. And I foresee that popular demands will be along those lines.

—In the last fortnight the Church hierarchy, and above all Cardinal Glemp, have repeatedly appealed for peace and order. Would you like to comment on his stand?

MICHNIK: I don't feel myself called upon to judge the behaviour of the head of the Catholic Church in Poland. I can only say that I understand the *intention* behind these appeals. Both Poland and the Church need *calm*. But if I had to formulate my own definition of the kind of calm which Poland needs, then the first thing I would have to say is that so long as political banditry flourishes there will never be calm in Poland. When does political banditry enjoy a favourable climate? When its perpetrators think themselves immune from prosecution—above the law, outside the law. No reasonable person in Poland today expects the superiors of those employed in the Interior Ministry to end this immunity. It can only be ended by the clarion call of public opinion. And perhaps above all by the Catholic bishops, in view of the authority of the Catholic Church in Poland. In other words, the path to calm lies not through any kind of pacification, but through the organisation of a movement to bring the security apparatus under social control. Poland's entire historical experience tells us that appeals for calm, whatever the intentions behind them, may in practice turn out to be appeals to unrest—it's unrealistic to suppose that people will remain calm in the face of murder.

YOU HAVE NOW BEEN *"at liberty" for three months, after more than two-and-a-half years in internment camps and in prison. You've travelled around the country, observed and talked to a great many people. What, in your judgment, survives of "Solidarity"—the organisation, the consciousness? What are the lasting changes?*

MICHNIK: Everything that is most important has survived. *Solidarity* has lost all those who thought of it as a path to a career, to rapid self-advancement. What is left is people who cherish the ideas of *Solidarity*—who identify themselves with the ideas of democracy and the self-governing Republic which are so deeply embedded in that movement. It's a powerful movement, fully conscious of its goals, and fully conscious that it may be a long road yet. It's a movement of wise and determined people. Anyone who believes, almost three years after the declaration of the "state of war", that *Solidarity* can be liquidated, believes in miracles. Communists should not believe in miracles.

—Although this consciousness is very widespread, and many, many Poles are still committed to those ideals, one still has an impression of some uncertainty—even helplessness—with regard to the possibilities of practical activity in Poland today. People see the long-term goals, but seem to be rather at a loss for tactics or strategy. Do you agree?

MICHNIK: This is characteristic of so-called "turning points" or transitional periods. . . . And of course it's rather like that now. There's an atmosphere of waiting for precise formulae, of searching for hope. Certainly something new will emerge from all this. But what? I think that above all it will be a search for new forms of *open* activity. If so far *Solidarity*'s activity has mainly been based on underground structures, now some sort of open structures will emerge. I emphasise *open* structures, not "legal" structures; it's not the same thing. "Legal" activity means acting in the framework of the prevailing laws, "open" activity means working publicly—not wondering whether some bureaucratic busybody considers it in accordance with legal regulations—for example, the rules on forming associations.

Another thing which I believe is important—and I want to underline it—is that in *Solidarity* reason prevailed, and the non-confrontational course has won out. It seems to me that in *Solidarity* we are already building the framework of an independent and democratic Poland. Today there are no other realistic paths to independence and democracy. The only alternative would be desperate actions in response to the political banditry of security apparatus functionaries.

And that's what I'm afraid of. In my view, we should not pay them back in kind—we should not kidnap, execute, murder these people, our opponents. Let these methods remain theirs alone. We are not fighting for power, but for the democratic form of our country; any kind of terrorism necessarily leads to moral debasement, to spiritual deformation, and would create a Polish ethos in which we would not want to live. In the Poland for which *Solidarity* is fighting there is no place for such murders.

—In the 1970s you wrote a now famous essay entitled "The New Evolutionism." Do you think its basic conception is still valid?

MICHNIK: If I remember rightly, it was based on the idea that it was time to stop hoping the Communist régime would become more reasonable and begin to reform itself from within; that instead of waiting for any such systemic reform, one ought to defend oneself against the system, and *organise outside it*—force it to concede areas of freedom, wrest those areas of freedom from it by our own action. It seems to me that this conception has been justified, but of course it's not for me to judge my own texts. . . .

—None the less, the premise of your argument was the possibility of at least some kind of unspoken, implicit compromise, some modus vivendi *with the Communist régime.*

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MICHNIK: Well, more in the sense of something which would be predictable. My thesis was, and is, that we have no reason to believe that the Communist authorities will shrink, for example, from shedding blood, from civil war; they never have shrunk from it in the past. However, we can organise ourselves in such a way that this course will not be profitable for the authorities. And what happened in August 1980 demonstrates that in a certain historical situation this kind of compromise is indeed possible. Of course, that's not the situation today, but looking ahead one should probably say this: the Polish people, aspiring to independence and democracy, are faced with the prospect of a succession of complex and arduous compromises, or with rivers of blood, from which we as a nation might simply not emerge alive. So long as it is still possible to seek compromise solutions, we should do everything to find them.

At the same time everyone knows that compromise is one thing, capitulation and servility another. And everyone in government knows that, although the Polish people and *Solidarity* are prepared to compromise, no one can force them into servility—the dignity of *Solidarity* can only be destroyed by taking our lives. If they want to crush us, they will have to kill us.

BOTH CHURCH AND OPPOSITION *spokesmen talk continually about the need for "dialogue." What are the conditions for this "dialogue"? Is there any "dialogue" with the authorities in Poland today?*

MICHNIK: If my information is correct, physical contacts, so to speak, have been going on all the time. There are meetings between government and Church representatives. Whether these meetings can be characterised as "dialogue" it's not up to me to say, and not me you should ask. We know from history, for instance from Cardinal Wyszynski's *Prison Notes*,[3] that not every meeting is a dialogue—such meetings can be a pretence at dialogue, they can be quite simply instruments for the subjugation of the Church. I don't want to comment any further on this because I don't feel it's my business. No other forms of dialogue exist. But where there are conflicts (and Poland is a country of many accumulated, painful conflicts) there are two ways of solving them—either by force, or by dialogue. For real dialogue you need the agreement of both sides. I am absolutely convinced that the leaders of *Solidarity*, whether Lech Walesa or Zbigniew Bujak, are ready for dialogue. They appeal for dialogue, but they want a *real* dialogue—talks between citizens, not talks between prison governor and prisoners. That's not dialogue.

—If I understand you correctly, you don't expect a "National Agreement" (a new Gdansk Agreement, as it were, a new August 1980) in the immediate future?

MICHNIK: That's a difficult question to answer. Of course, like everyone in *Solidarity*—or almost everyone—I would *like* to think that such an agreement was possible: that this highly dramatic social conflict in Poland could be replaced by some broad framework of agreement. But I fear we can't count on the authorities taking any steps in this direction. And that is why I think people should dedicate themselves in the first place to self-defence. The murder of Father Jerzy has brought this home to us most forcefully, most harshly. The organisation of effective self-defence can be a path to agreement—everyone accepts that.

In my view this is the *only* path to agreement. Every other path is illusory. Only in this way can the apparatus of power be cleansed of its terrorist elements—the people who hire cut-throats to murder political opponents. No reasonable person would say today that it's possible—or desirable—to reach any kind of agreement with those who hired the three assassins of Father Jerzy. For both political and moral reasons. On the contrary, today we need to say more loudly than ever that with people who hire murderers, who regulate social conflicts in this fashion, who believe in that model of social order, with such people there will be no agreement.

IN THE WESTERN PEACE MOVEMENT—*or at least in some parts of it, such as European Nuclear Disarmament* (END) *in Britain—there's a good deal of interest in dialogue with human-rights campaigners and opposition activists in Central and Eastern Europe. Do you have any message for them, concerning perhaps the priorities of such a movement, or the possibilities of such a dialogue?*

MICHNIK: I have only rather obvious things to say. Of course, we always need dialogue with people of good will. But I should like to repeat what has been said already by the wisest people from the political world in which I find myself—people like Professor Andrei Sakharov, and my friend the Czech writer Vaclav Havel—namely, that inherent in every peace movement there may be simply an aversion to personal suffering, or there may be aversion to war. Self-evidently I am personally in favour of an anti-war movement.

But people should understand that wars do not break out because people have guns. Wars break out because people create political systems directed towards expansion or conquest. In 1939 the Germans attacked Poland—and the whole world—not because they had tanks, but because they had Hitler. And a peace movement which appealed for non-resistance in the face of Hitler, which did not offer armed resistance even to Hitlerism, would be, irrespective of its intentions, *de facto* a movement for the subordination of the world to fascism. We Poles know this well, as do you British. After all, even during the War there was a movement in Britain for a separate peace. The section of British public opinion which rejected that path did not do so because it wanted war. It wanted peace, but peace could only be achieved through a war with Hitler. There was no other way.

In other words, the only sensible guarantee for the peaceful resolution of conflicts is to find a common basis for negotiation—and I know no better common basis than that of respect for human rights. It's an imperfect basis, of course; but

[3] From 1953-56 Cardinal Wyszynski was "interned" in a remote monastery where he wrote his *Prison Notes*.

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we live in a world of imperfections. However, this is the *least* imperfect. So the struggle for peace only makes sense in today's world as a struggle for respect for human rights. To me that is the *test* of all peace movements. If any anti-war movement emerges, and does not place respect for human rights as its first demand, then it's not an anti-war movement. It's a *pseudo* anti-war movement.

—Could you say something about the policies of Western governments towards Poland during the "state of war" period and today?

MICHNIK: I don't want to play the part of an adviser to Western governments, because I don't feel that's my role and I would feel comical in that role. I can only say this, from my point of view: over the last 150 or 200 years Western states and Western public opinion have never behaved so loyally and wisely as they have done now. In Poland there exists a betrayal complex. We always fear that we will be betrayed by the West. And this complex has real historical roots. This is how it was in the period of the partitions and in the Napoleonic era. This is how it was at the time of our national risings, and this is how it was at the time of Yalta.

But this time things turned out otherwise. Before the thirteenth of December no reasonable person in Poland would have expected that, as a result of some political catastrophe, the West would come to our aid. At least I can say that of myself, and I often spoke in that vein. What happened surprised me. The broad and splendid movement of solidarity with Poland, of solidarity with *Solidarity*, the aid for Poland. And the comprehension that in our country things are happening which concern not merely the future of Poland—but perhaps the future of our continent, perhaps even wider. . . .

—And Western sanctions? . . .

MICHNIK: Party propaganda in Poland and the leaders of the Polish United Workers' Party, including General Jaruzelski, have repeatedly condemned these sanctions and attributed the failure of their economic policy to the existence of sanctions. I am in no position to judge the accuracy of this diagnosis. However, I can state one thing categorically: if these sanctions have indeed been as damaging as we read in *Trybuna Ludu*, then undoubtedly responsibility for them lies with *this* government. One hardly expects the President of the United States or the Prime Minister of Great Britain to be guided in their policy-making by altruistic intentions. If the leaders of the Polish state look at the policies of countries like the United States, England or France, they should be able to draw their own conclusions and take measures that would lead to the lifting of sanctions. So far as public opinion in Poland is concerned, the matter is simple. These sanctions were generally regarded as an act of solidarity with the Polish people, with their aspirations, and it seems to me that from this point of view, if they were so conceived by Western leaders, they have fulfilled their function, done their job right the way through.

—And in future?

MICHNIK: Again I'm not in a position to answer that, but if I had to speculate, then it seems to me that I have to thank the policy of sanctions, among other things, for the fact that we can talk here today, that I'm sitting in my flat and not in prison on Rakowiecka Street. For this defence of my colleagues and myself I would like to offer my warmest thanks to all those who have helped us.

FINALLY, *I would like, if I may, to ask you a little about your personal plans. In prison you wrote no less than three books—can you sustain such phenomenal intellectual productivity?*

MICHNIK: In prison I certainly worked quite hard, which only goes to show that there's no place under the sun where a really bad character like myself can't get by. That's also why I don't fear another spell in prison, for I could certainly write another three books, and would be able to pass them to my publishers, now I've learned how. And those who held me in prison know very well that I've learned this. Whether I can sustain that productivity I don't know. I would like to be *useful*, useful today, in this situation, which I hope calls for different kinds of people—including those who are not politicians but men of letters, men of reflection and protest. I think of myself as such a person. In any case, prison has not led me to believe that in the face of murder we should keep silent. Quite the reverse. I came out of prison convinced that only plain, direct speaking can save one man's life, and open prison gates for another—as happened to me. So now I'm trying to do anything I can to open the gates for my colleagues who are still in prison. I'm thinking of two outstanding activists from Gdansk, Bogdan Lis and Piotr Mierzewski. I'm thinking of my colleagues from Huta Katowice, imprisoned on a false, despicable charge of robbery. I'm thinking of all those who are still in gaol or who have been re-arrested. Not only I but all my friends are doing everything we can so that they won't have to sit much longer in prison, or, being imprisoned, will at least have the feeling that every day they are taking part in our common struggle. We should make their imprisonment so burdensome to the authorities that they will judge it best not to keep them in gaol, just as they finally judged it best to release the so-called "Eleven." We were freed not because the authorities had a sudden fit of humanitarianism, but because there was no other effective solution to the problem.

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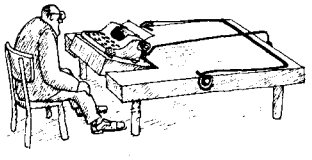
AMERICAN CHRONICLE

"Partisan Review" & the Phillips Curve

Letter from New York—By JOSEPH EPSTEIN



OUR CENTURY has known no shortage of impressive journals devoted to art and the life of the mind. To name only some of the most notable, in France there has been the *Nouvelle Revue Française*; in England, Ford Madox Ford's *The English Review*, T. S. Eliot's *The Criterion*, F. R. Leavis's *Scrutiny*, Cyril Connolly's *Horizon*; in the United States, *Poetry, The Little Review, The Dial*, and a great many others. But if one needs to name a single American magazine that, in the history of intellectual journalism in this century, surpassed all others in this country in significance, that magazine, in my view, is *Partisan Review*.

The case for its *importance* would be more difficult to argue. The magazine published no single great work—no *Waste Land*, no censorship-breaking sequences of *Ulysses*—as did *The Dial* and *The Little Review*. By the time it came into being in the 1930s, the work of literary modernism was pretty much complete. Neither can *Partisan Review* be said to have developed any important writers; the only two artists whose names are associated with it are Delmore Schwartz and Saul Bellow, both of whose careers would probably not have turned out much differently had the magazine never existed. Unlike *The Kenyon Review* under the editorship of John Crowe Ransom, which served as a centre of sorts for the New Criticism, *Partisan Review* was never the home for a particular school of literary criticism or movement in the arts generally. Unlike *Scrutiny* under Leavis, the magazine never seemed the reflection of a single overpowering intellectual personality; nor, unlike *Horizon* under Connolly, that of a single exquisite literary sensibility.

If *Partisan Review* had no central intellectual preoccupation, its pages were none the less over the years sown with a rich variety of material. Clement Greenberg supplied the theoretical underpinnings and set the stage for the triumph of Abstract Expressionism in *PR*. Philip Rahv, for the better part of the magazine's history one of its two principal editors, supplied, along with Lionel Trilling, a good deal of interesting literary criticism. More dubiously Leslie Fiedler discovered a secret homosexual theme in *Huckleberry Finn* in his infamous essay "C'mon Back to the Raft, Huck, Honey." More trivially Susan Sontag explained in the pages of *PR* the meaning of the essentially homosexual satire on taste known as "Camp" and became famous for having done so. Small though its circulation might be, *Partisan Review* was read by people in positions of cultural influence: the editors of the news-weeklies and large metropolitan dailies, professors in prestigious universities, certain more cerebral minds in broadcasting and advertising.

THERE HAVE BEEN NO representative *Partisan Review* writers. Over its history the magazine's best writer on political subjects has been Sidney Hook, and its best writer on literary subjects was Lionel Trilling—yet one thinks of neither as primarily a *Partisan Review* writer. It published interesting fiction; its editors' interest in poetry in general, as well as the poetry published in its pages, was negligible. But if there were no representative *Partisan Review* writers, there was a representative *Partisan Review* style. It was the style known as cultural criticism. In practice this meant a widening of the lens: writers in *Partisan Review* characteristically examined literary or political works or intellectual careers in the light of the larger culture. Their approach tended to be Olympian in its loftiness, though disinterestedness was far from their reigning tone. Most—though not all—of the chief *Partisan Review* writers were hooked on that intellectual candy that I think of as M&Ms; a confection made up of a loose sort of Marxism and a devotion to Modernism.

During its palmier days there was a core of what one thought of as *PR* regular contributors, including Delmore Schwartz, William Barrett, Mary McCarthy, Irving Howe, Clement Greenberg, Dwight Macdonald, Harold Rosenberg, Lionel Abel, Lionel and Diana Trilling, and Philip Rahv. This core was supplemented by an impressive roster of names more traditionally academic: Jacques Barzun, Meyer Schapiro, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Richard Chase. Added to these was an extremely impressive roster of European writers, among them George Orwell, Hannah Arendt, Ignazio Silone, Nicola Chiaromonte, Albert Camus, André Malraux, Arthur Koestler, Cyril Connolly, and W. H. Auden. In sum the best prose writers of the generation that came into its intellectual majority in the 1930s appeared in *Partisan Review*. At its peak period, from the middle 1940s through the early '50s, *Partisan Review* was a brilliant magazine, brilliantly, if somewhat loosely, edited.

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In *Making It*, the first volume of his autobiography, Norman Podhoretz refers to the core of writers grouped around *Partisan Review*—they also worked on and wrote for *Commentary* and were among the founders of *Dissent*—as "The Family." This seems to me a very useful metaphor. Like a family these writers had a great deal in common. Most of these writers had grown up in the depression; most were Jewish—though, to continue speaking metaphorically, there were some mixed marriages—and most had cut their intellectual teeth as anti-Stalinists doing nearly ceaseless polemical battle against an extremely well-organised American Communist Party and its many fellow-travellers. Most, too, were not yet academics, for anti-Semitism was still strong in American universities, particularly in English and philosophy departments, where the chief interests of these intellectuals lay. The sense of being besieged by Stalinists in American intellectual life gave an additional feeling of closeness, of family feeling, to them. *Partisan Review* itself, originally a journal founded in connection with the John Reed Club in New York, had to be wrested, in an act of schism, from the American Communist Party.

Like a family of a certain sort, the writers around *Partisan Review* were wildly disputatious among themselves. They were expert at attacking their enemies in public, but in private they did a pretty nice job on one another. Philip Rahv was a specialist in the behind-the-back sally. William Barrett, in *The Truants*, his memoir of life among the *PR* intellectuals, describes bouts of Rahv's "analytical exuberance" in this regard—by which Barrett means Rahv's "passion for dissecting character into its lowest possible motives." But Rahv was not alone in this. He once called, with three or four layers of irony intended, Lionel Trilling "the Matthew Arnold of Morningside Heights"; but Delmore Schwartz did him one better by calling Trilling "the Matthew Arnold of Grant's tomb." Schwartz must have had a thing about Trilling, for he is also reported (in James Atlas's biography) as saying that Trilling was very intelligent but he, Schwartz, wished he wouldn't often say the most commonplace things in a tone of voice more appropriate for announcing he had found a cure for cancer. But this sort of remark was common coin among this group. One of them once told me, apropos of Mary McCarthy, "I wish Mary would stop writing fiction, so that she could devote her considerable creative energies to growing basil in the window of her Paris apartment. . . ." They were a family, all right, but one of a kind in which every member treated every other as if he or she were the black sheep.

Lately we have had a spate of memoirs written by people in and around the *Partisan Review* circle, or, as they are more familiarly known, "the New York Intellectuals." There have been Norman Podhoretz's two volumes of intellectual autobiography, *Making It* and *Breaking Ranks*; William Barrett's *The Truants: Adventures among the Intellectuals*; Irving Howe's *A Margin of Hope*; and, most recently, William Phillips's *A Partisan View: Five Decades of the Literary Life*.[1] In the *New York Times Book Review* for 26 February 1984, Nathan Glazer remarked how different these memoirs are from the memoirs written by British intellectuals. They contain, for example, very little about school-days, no American equivalent to those hellish years at public school, those Edenic ones at Oxbridge. Apart from Paul Goodman, there were no active homosexuals among the New York intellectuals who have written memoirs, and so sex comes to loom less than large. Personal relations, as Glazer noted, are not usually featured; political and intellectual relations are. With only occasional exceptions these books tend to be about their authors' public lives, which means, since they are not people who have held public office, the positions they took on the major intellectual questions of the day, the betrayals they felt, how they have come to believe what they do. Boyhood friends, wives, children, lovers do not so much take back seats as they are stowed in the trunk.

For the most part perhaps this is just as well. The writing of many of the *Partisan Review* regulars was brilliant and often marked by great intellectual order, while their personal lives seem gray and marked by pathetic sordor. At one point in *A Partisan View* William Phillips notes with surprise that Norman Podhoretz and Steven Marcus, then very young men, seemed to know just about every article and book review ever published in *Partisan Review*. This does not surprise me in the least. Viewed from the distance, even the middle distance, the writers around *Partisan Review* seemed very impressive: confident, penetrating, elegant in their prose, they seemed, again from the distance, the intellectual equivalent of great athletes or actors—in their own right, stars. The young Norman Podhoretz and Steven Marcus must have viewed them in this wise, and thus they knew all their work in the way certain much younger children know all the baseball batting averages.

Up close, though, is something else. I admired the contributors to *Partisan Review* no less than Podhoretz and Marcus did. They were men who wrote in the same magazine in which the work of figures such as Gide and Malraux appeared; if not themselves gods, they seemed near to them—often, in fact, a book review or two away.

But I recall vividly the first occasion that I saw a number of them in the flesh. One among them wore false teeth that, by comparison, made George Washington's dentist look like an artist. Another, a writer who could write about Jean-Paul Sartre as if a state of intellectual parity existed between them, had scarcely any teeth at all. Yet another looked like a Plymouth salesman down on his luck. When I was introduced to a literary critic whose work I then revered, my first instinct was to inform him that his shirt was sticking out of his trousers—except that it wasn't: it was merely the overall effect of "schlepperosity" he conveyed that led me to think it was. Another of these writers daintily crossed one leg over the other to reveal a sock into which was woven the figure of Donald Duck. I mention these things not in the spirit of snobbery but to convey my impression of the conditions of dishabille, spiritual as well as sartorial, in which these intellectuals, so brilliantly got up for their writing, actually lived their lives. In *Breaking Ranks* Norman Podhoretz quotes a remark that Marion Magid,

[1] *A Partisan View: Five Decades of the Literary Life*. By William Phillips. Stein & Day, $19.95.

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his colleague at *Commentary*, made to him about a crowd of New York intellectuals: "Do you realise that every person in this room is a tragedy to some family or other?"

Between the lives and the work of most writers an ample distance, or discrepancy, can usually be found; but among the writers of the *Partisan Review* circle it has to be measured in kilometres. They lived in a style of scruffy 1930s bohemianism, yet in their work they interested themselves in the whole of culture; and when they wrote about politics, their point of view, laced with an amateur's Marxism, tended to be "world historical." The political issues that inflamed their minds, as Nathan Glazer has noted, were

> "the nature of the Soviet Union in the light of the writings and expectations of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky; the prospects of socialism and revolution in the United States; the legitimacy of the support of the Western democracies in World War II in view of the fact they were also capitalist; the degree to which Marxism and Leninism were responsible for the destruction of democratic liberties and the creation of a totalitarian state in the Soviet Union."

YET ANOTHER VAST DISCREPANCY existed between the way many of these issues were decided and the consequences of the decisions. By now it is a truism that the influence of intellectuals on the politics and culture of their day is out of all proportion to their own relatively small numbers. Why, for example, should it matter if a handful of such people, running a magazine out of a dingy editorial office below 18th Street in Manhattan for a readership of a few thousand, decide whether or not they are in favour of the entry of the United States into World War II?

The disproportions here, if not grotesque, seem at least comic. And yet matter it did—and does. It matters because the magazine, if it is good enough to compel interest, is also likely to compel its readers to follow it; and its readers, in this instance being artists, academics, journalists, and other intellectuals, themselves have an influence on the general culture and nation at large that can exceed that of people with more wealth and even that of people who, in conventional terms, are considered to have more power. A democracy may function on the basis of one man, one vote; but the nature of the work of artists, academics, journalists, and intellectuals, in subtle ways not always clear even to themselves, puts them in a position to influence much more than votes. Like pebbles thrown in the pond, their influence ripples out in larger and larger circles.

As this ripple effect has become evident—and those who don't believe it need only consider the role of intellectuals in the protests against the Viet Nam war—the history of intellectuals has tended to loom larger in significance. In recognition of this significance young scholars have written dissertations about one or another aspect of the New York intellectuals, taking the subject with a seriousness that bemuses the people who had lived through the incidents and events that are now the subject of PhD scholarship. In a recent conversation Sidney Hook remarked on this phenomenon to me, saying, with great good humour, that it often amuses him to see such matters taken with such seriousness. Speaking of World War II, Professor Hook said: "I can remember spending the better part of an afternoon before Pearl Harbor arguing William Phillips and Philip Rahv into taking a position of 'critical support' for American entry into the war against Hitler." Behind that single line of Professor Hook's one can see the coffee cups, the cigarette butts, the rye-bread crusts, as Phillips and Rahv finally surrended to Sidney Hook's powerful argumentation. Of such stuff is history made.

YET REAL HISTORY it is, and as the rise of the intellectual as a force in American life becomes more and more evident, this history becomes more and more significant, and it becomes more and more important to get it straight. In this history *Partisan Review*, no one can seriously doubt, has had a central place. In the history of *Partisan Review* William Phillips, who has been one of the magazine's principal editors—and in recent years its chief editor—is in a privileged position. To Baron Munchhausen's rude but often pertinent question, "Vas you dere, Sharlie?" Mr Phillips can answer, as can no one else alive today: "You're damn right I was, every bloody minute!" Thus the publication of his memoirs, *A Partisan View*, is itself an event of no little significance. In this book the main witness, you might say, has taken the stand.

BEFORE WE CONSIDER William Phillips's memoir—its accuracy, its quality as an autobiographical work of literature, its contribution to our historical understanding of the events through which its author lived—allow me to register my own sense of William Phillips as an editor and an intellectual figure, for he is a man I have never met and know only through his works. This sense is not, to put it gently, of a commanding presence. I have read his occasional essays and reviews in the intellectual magazines, but these have not left a firm impress, since his writing has never seemed to me to be notable for original or courageous views or to have the stamp of strong personality. Much of what he has written has seemed to bear heavy injections of received opinion—received, please understand, only in the highest intellectual circles—and it calls to mind a remark of Theodore Roosevelt's: "It is just as easy to be conventional about the fantastic as about the commonplace."

Since I have never written for *Partisan Review*, my sense of William Phillips as an editor, that of an outsider though it is, is again of a dim presence. Perhaps because Philip Rahv, his co-editor on *PR* for so many years, wrote more and generally expressed strong opinions in a confidently cadenced prose, I tended to think that the strength and character of *Partisan Review* during its best days derived chiefly from the editorial influence of Philip Rahv. This view was enhanced and reinforced when the magazine took on a third principal editor, Richard Poirier of Rutgers, a change which caused Rahv to retreat from the affairs of *PR* and eventually to leave it to begin a new if short-lived magazine of his own called *Modern Occasions*. With Poirier atop the masthead, *Partisan Review* suddenly steered a radically new course, heading off to those islands where the *go-go chi-chi* culture of the hippoisie is

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celebrated and where tenured middle-aged professors—Professor Poirier, actually—write solemn articles in praise of the Beatles. When the two principal editors of *PR* were Phillips and Rahv, the magazine seemed to take on the intellectual character of Rahv; when the two principal editors were Phillips and Poirier, it seemed to take on the character of Poirier. And now that William Phillips is the sole principal editor of the magazine, as he has been for fifteen years, it seems to have scarcely any character at all.

This, then, is how, before reading his memoir, I viewed William Phillips; for how he views himself we must go to his memoir. *A Partisan View* is an extraordinarily gloomy book. Life for William Phillips has been no cabaret, old friend. He has lived in a sea of ideas, and intellectual crosswinds, a gusty *Zeitgeist*, and various new artistic waves have kept him clinging to the gunwales. Sometimes Phillips's confusions are palpable; often they are sad. In an early chapter he describes life in the Jewish Bronx with his parents: a hypochondriacal mother who specialised in threats of suicide, a "*luftmensch*" father (more *luft* than *mensch*) with a weak sense of reality, and—no relief here—"a grandmother [who] was the demon of the family." Still perplexed, Phillips, in his middle seventies, writes: "What the relation between my mother and father was I could never figure out."

FOR A MAN WHO has spent all his adult life as an editor, Phillips's memoir is strong on clichés. When he is called upon to appear before a grand jury, he is reminded of Kafka's *The Trial*. On the current day's political situation he remarks: "We are clearly living in an age of transition"—a line first used, my guess is, by Adam to Eve as they were leaving Eden. When sent on a State Department tour, he finds Australia provincial, Japan crowded, India poor and overpopulated. Such is the penetrating quality of the editor of *Partisan Review*'s travel observations; surely it is better to leave home without them.

With a single exception the literary opinions in *A Partisan View* are entirely predictable. On occasion they are predictable-egregious, as for example when Phillips declares Stephen Spender "a major poet." When Phillips's opinions about writers aren't the stock opinions of the day—I am not at all sure even Stephen Spender considers Stephen Spender a major poet—they smack of the efforts of an editor trying to keep his lines open to writers who have made or one day might make valuable contributors to his journal. Of Daniel Bell, for example, Phillips, after remarks more befitting in their smarminess to a Motion Picture Academy Jean Hersholt Award on Oscar night, writes: "Though Bell had been associated with the neo-Conservatives, he is a more complex and flexible thinker", and then goes on to report that "in the eighties he joined the board of *Partisan Review*." The one exception is Phillips's kind words for Solzhenitsyn, not as a moral hero merely but as a novelist, "a writer who deals with contemporary political subjects but whose powers as a novelist are so great that they are not reducible to their political content." This is the only courageous opinion I was able to discover in a book of more than three hundred pages.

APART FROM the vicissitudes of life—being in battle, facing down a bully, fighting off a mugger—the intellectual's only true opportunity to display courage is through clearly expressing his opinions. Courage doesn't quite qualify as a *sine qua non* in an intellectual's equipage. Originality is perhaps a finer thing to be invested with, though of course very few intellectuals are so invested. A subtle mind may wish to forgo displays of courage in favour of modulated statement; one thinks here of Lionel Trilling. But the fact remains that a disproportionately large percentage of the writers and intellectuals whose work has survived have been courageous in their opinions. William Hazlitt, summing up his career as an essayist, maintained that, whatever his faults, at least he never listened to "the Echo"; and it is of course in large part for his independent views that we now admire Hazlitt. George Orwell without courage would probably not be a name that anyone would recognise today. Orwell may even have had more courage than talent, though perhaps it is fairer to say that a major part of Orwell's talent is to be found in his courage.

When we speak of courageous intellectual opinions, however, a qualification or two is needed. In this century, when intellectuals can almost be said to have cultivated alienation, to take up opinions that go against the grain of the society in which they live has required no great courage—certainly not in the democratic countries of the West. Going against the general drift of society is, in a clichéd reading of their function, what intellectuals are supposed to do. In a classic formulation of this cliché Irving Howe has recently said: "No one has ever gone very wrong by jabbing at established power." Yet another, no less real, test of intellectual courage is the courage required by an intellectual to go against the established power of his fellow intellectuals. George Orwell, whom we honour today above all for his willingness in the Stalinist atmosphere of the 1930s to do just that, wrote:

> "But politico-literary intellectuals are not usually frightened of mass opinion. What they are frightened of is the prevailing opinion within their own group."

FEAR OF PREVAILING OPINION within his own group seems to me the major motif in *A Partisan View*. William Phillips had bucked his own group once before, when he turned against the American Communist Party and became a strong anti-Stalinist. Perhaps he had not the energy to do it a second time. In any case it is, I suspect, Phillips's fear of alienating his fellow intellectuals that gives his memoir its glum and humourless tone. One of the things about having a fixed code of morals, Virginia Woolf once remarked, is that at least you know what to laugh at. The absence of any fixed code, anything even approaching a strong point of view, gives William Phillips's book its sadly indeterminate quality: there is more waffling in this memoir than one is likely to find on a busy day at the International House of Pancakes.

IN THE LIGHT OF *A Partisan View* William Barrett's remarks in *The Truants* on the character of William Phillips seem to me very smart.

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> "In a sense, there were two William Phillipses: one that presented itself to the public world of strangers, and the second that revealed itself only at home in the company of a small group of friends in whose affections he felt secure. The first was a rather tense, nervous, and fidgety person. . . . The second person emerged and shone fully mostly at his own home, when he felt thoroughly at ease with the 'family', a few friends who, he felt, were really bound to him. Then he became expansive, warm, and witty; his conversation flowed like a radiant and sparkling stream. Many nights, when we were walking away from his house, Delmore would observe with affectionate sadness, 'If only William could get all that into writing!' . . ."

Alas, William Phillips never got it into his writing. Among his friends he might be capable of lovely witticisms, such as his remarking (as Barrett reports) that Philip Rahv was "a manic-impressive", who, if he were ever to undergo psychoanalysis, would be likely to "break down and confess he was a great man." But in *A Partisan View* his reigning tone is that of a modern-day prose Polonius specialising in the higher sententiousness. Consider this characteristic Polonian passage:

> "Of course, we are all products of a specific time and cultural moment, and only people without a core can identify with every old and every new tendency or fashion. Ideally there must be some dialogue, some play, between what one is and what one becomes; otherwise a sensibility formed in one period can never relate to new images of ourselves. As T. S. Eliot and others have pointed out, there is a fragile and indefinable balance between continuity and change that only those minds that are both sufficiently open and particularly closed can negotiate."

Saul Bellow once quoted a passage similar to this one and capped it by remarking: "One of the nice things about *Hamlet* is that Polonius is stabbed."

Polonius was not known for his candour, and neither is William Phillips. Covering his involvement as a young man with the Communist Party, for example, the account he offers of these years fails to persuade. "One gets suckered in", he notes, ". . . by the spirit and ostensible goals of the organisation, and by the *Zeitgeist*." He was, he says, "more closely associated with the Communist Party than I realised at the time." Later he tells of attending Party "meetings in the inner sanctum", which seems unlikely for a man who was an outsider. He was also allowed to do book reviews for Party organs—again something that Party members were unlikely to allow anyone to do whom they did not consider completely safe. Phillips avers that he was never a member of the Communist Party, but given the kind of writing he did at the time—he wrote in Party organs under the pseudonym of Wallace Phelps—this scarcely could have mattered. Here is a sample taken from *Partisans and Writers*, by James Gilbert, a book published in 1968 and quite admiring of Phillips and Rahv and *Partisan Review*:

> "When a poet's sensibility is rooted in the proletariat and adjusted to traditional poetry, he has the equipment to produce good proletarian poetry."

Why Phillips finally broke with the Communists is similarly left unclear; all that is made clear is that he and Rahv both did so with great trepidation.

SIMILAR MEMORIES screen his account of his involvement with the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, the organisation of anti-Communist intellectuals formed at the time of the pro-Communist Waldorf Astoria Peace Conference in 1949. Phillips goes into great detail about his "principled" objections to the committee, though he allows that he was not in the forefront of those who opposed the antics of Senator Joseph McCarthy:

> "But unlike those liberals and radicals who felt that McCarthy was the only enemy [he writes], I believed that McCarthy's lies did not make Communist lies more palatable."

He features himself as on the "left of the Committee's executive board", and here as elsewhere he pictures himself moving "skeptically and critically to be sure." (Reading the intellectual magazines over the years, one learns to be especially wary of the phrase *to be sure*; it usually is hauled out, as here, to cover only the most dubious statements.)

But for all the detail Phillips offers of the period, he somehow fails to note that for some years *Partisan Review* was the official organ of the American Committee. More significant, he fails to mention that funds from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, of which the American Committee was an independent associate, paid for 1,000 subscriptions to *Partisan Review*. When the committee was finally dissolved, its treasury—what was left from the sale of *Time* magazine stock, a gift from Henry Luce—was divided between *Partisan Review* and the New York social-democratic weekly, *The New Leader*.

WHENEVER ONE HAPPENS to know something about the events Phillips chronicles in his memoir, those events, in his account of them, seem inaccurate, or oddly shaded, or somehow dressed out to make him look good and his enemies bad. Phillips's enemies are chiefly those intellectuals who have turned from standard left-wing attitudes, the so-called neo-Conservatives. Among them Hilton Kramer, who has written critically about the turn that *Partisan Review* has taken under Phillips's editorship,[2] is especially lambasted.

[2] See Hilton Kramer, "Partisan Review: Down the memory-hole", *The New Criterion* (September 1983). At one point in his memoir Phillips recalls an evening in the 1950s at his own home, when, in the presence of a number of abstract expressionist painters, Kramer is supposed to have said that the new painting "represented the drives of American imperialism." Kramer not only doesn't remember saying any such thing—he doesn't remember any such evening, and he claims that he did not even know many of the painters Phillips mentions until much later. Well, one might say, it is one man's word against another's, and who is to say who is right? Unfortunately for Phillips's account, one of the painters he mentions as being in his home that evening, Bradley Tomlin, died in 1953, which was well before Kramer even knew William Phillips.

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Politics does strange things to the memory—or at least to William Phillips's memory. If one looks at a recent advertisement in *Partisan Review* with the headline "These are some of the people who have written for *Partisan Review*", one will look in vain for such names as Sidney Hook, Norman Podhoretz, William Barrett, or Hilton Kramer; in their place, though, one will find such names as Noam Chomsky, Morris Dickstein, Adrienne Rich, and Herbert Marcuse. One need not be skilled in the methods of Kremlinology to be amused. The dropped names are no longer left-wing OK, and so they are slipped down "the memory hole."

And what is behind this squirming, these calculated inaccuracies, memory screens, and petty purgings? Is *A Partisan View* no more than a demonstration of Polonius gone gaga? To think so would almost be charitable. Instead the book presents a man terribly worried about being left at the post—or, more precisely, being caught at the post and not Left. Throughout his memoir William Phillips continues to insist that he has been true to his, and his magazine's, youthful idealism.

> "The main effort of the magazine was to resist the conservative push, without, however, giving in to those radicals in politics and in the arts who had swung to a sectarian extreme."

And again, remarking on *Partisan Review*'s swing away from doctrinaire left-wing positions in the 1930s:

> "As I look back, it would appear that we swung too far, though I must say that we always distinguished ourselves from the ultra-conservative anti-Communists, and the magazine always remained critical of the commercial and ruling politics of the country."

In other words the Communists were bad, but anti-Communism, taken too far, is quite bad too. Or, as Polonius might put it, "Neither a Communist nor an anti-Communist be."

"A FOOLISH CONSISTENCY", said Emerson, "is the hobgoblin of little minds." It is astonishing how little William Phillips over the years seems to have changed his mind. He still retains an uncritical adoration of the works of Modernism and still tries to understand the world through a vague Marxism. He still feels that the major task of the intellectual is to criticise his own country. At one point in his memoir, he recounts asking Hannah Arendt where she would go "if the US were to become fascist." At another he explains that, though he went on a world tour paid for by the State Department, he assured the State Department official he dealt with that he could not be expected to defend American policies. "I might even criticise them." Apparently his mother never told him, "If you can't say anything nice, stay home."

People who revered *Partisan Review* first perceived a sorry slippage in standards in the magazine with the onset of the "counter-culture" in the 1960s. William Phillips, his memoir reveals, does not see it that way at all. It was while seeing Jack Gelber's *The Connection*, a play in which heroin addicts are cast as heroic figures, that Phillips sensed his "feelings of loneliness and uprootedness, of being an outsider." This joined another Phillipsian fear—that "of being boxed out by ideological commitments from a relation to the contemporary scene." Both fears, though, must have been calmed when Phillips determined to let his magazine—as they used to say in the '60s—"go with the flow." *Partisan Review* suddenly carried the work of such writers as Ronald Tavel, Ronald Sukenick, and Herbert Marcuse. One of Phillips's chief regrets is that he hadn't gotten on board earlier and done more to promote the writings of the Beats. He feels that during the 1960s *Partisan Review* discriminated nicely between "seminal and trendy ideas." During these years, too, "several new and younger people became associated with the magazine. Richard Gilman, Morris Dickstein, and Peter Brooks, critics open to cultural innovation, joined our board, along with Susan Sontag, Christopher Lasch, and Richard Poirier [the Beatles man], who may have flirted too much with the counter-culture."

PARTISAN REVIEW AT THAT TIME moved to Rutgers University, and therein hangs another tale.

As Rutgers' limited support of the magazine began to run out, a dispute arose over possession of *Partisan Review*'s quite valuable papers. In the terms of the agreement these papers were to be on "deposit" at Rutgers. Phillips understood the word *deposit* to mean that the papers would remain there as long as the magazine did; Rutgers construed the word to mean that the university would own the papers outright. Things got nasty fast. The magazine's office was put under lock. Phillips felt betrayed, not only by the university but by his colleagues. Polonius was stabbed; in front of the arras was not Hamlet but Richard Poirier, Thomas Edwards, and other Rutgers faculty members associated with the magazine who, in litigation, testified on behalf of the university.

Meanwhile Phillips, along with being locked out of his office, was frisked by security guards. This was an event, he recounts, that "all my liberal experience and faith in my country had taught me could not happen here, unless the country went fascist." This remark occurs on page 284, and it is the first the reader has heard about William Phillips's faith in his country. Phillips subsequently won in litigation, and *Partisan Review* moved on to Boston University, where it is being protected by the administration of President John Silber, one of the great *bêtes noires* of the academic Left—a two-ton irony William Phillips fails to note, except to say: "Throughout the trial, Boston University was very supportive. President John Silber was particularly strong and sympathetic, and Vice-President Gerald Gross was helpful. . . ."

Throughout *A Partisan View* one senses a missing presence: Philip Rahv, William Phillips's co-editor during the magazine's most glorious days. Rahv is mentioned from time to time, usually in small and grudging ways; but nothing like a portrait is offered until the book's closing pages, where Phillips, now that Rahv is safely dead, really lowers the boom. Earlier, in connection with Clement Greenberg, Phillips remarks: "Perhaps I am unduly sympathetic to such an assertive personality"; but with Philip Rahv, a more assertive personality than he had bargained for, the sympathy wore out.

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Their relationship reminds one of all the Jewish jokes about partners that one has ever heard—except that in the case of Rahv and Phillips the business was high culture in America. Rahv always did his best to push Phillips into the background; he said terrible things about Phillips behind his back; he used to arrive early at the office to beat him to the mail, so that he could handle the more famous contributors himself. Phillips stresses Rahv's ineptitude. "He reminded me of my father in his awkwardness and his detachment from his body. He had no idea how a car worked, or what specific medicines were for. He once asked me what aspirin does. . . . He could not throw or catch a ball, ride a bike, play any game, or swim." Phillips tries for balance—"I do not want to be understood as denying those qualities that made him an outstanding critic and editor in earlier years"—but it is all too obvious that Rahv made life hell for Phillips, and now, in the grave, he is being paid back. Before, when Rahv was alive, Phillips, true to the spirit of the *Partisan Review* circle, kept his criticism confined to backbiting. In *The Truants* William Barrett reports that Phillips used to refer to Rahv's various wives and girlfriends as "Rahv's alter-Iago."

Polonius and Iago—what a pair! Not even Shakespeare thought to put them in the same play, yet in life they worked together for decades editing perhaps the most interesting magazine ever produced in this country. The old *Partisan Review* was a magazine that, before its fall, seemed to set standards for high literary quality and the rigorous investigation of ideas. It was a magazine that the most notable writers of its time wished to appear in, and often did. Produced by two men who intensely disliked each other, neither of whom was anything like effective without the other, the magazine was nevertheless in its time a resplendent thing. "A magazine", wrote Cyril Connolly, in the introduction to *The Golden Horizon*, an anthology of the best writing to appear in his own magazine, "is greater than those who produce it, and both transcends and transforms them." *Partisan Review* cannot be said to have transformed its editors, but when the magazine was good—which it was for a long and distinguished stretch—it certainly transcended them.

This year *Partisan Review* will be fifty years old. It is today a sad shadow of its former self, a once beautiful stallion gone weak in the knees, a sorry and toothless thing. Those of us who admired it and profited from it will not regret the day when it is finally put out to pasture.

AUTHORS

Tracey Lloyd has until recently been living in Papua New Guinea. She has written for the theatre and for the BBC, and is currently working on a stage play.

E. J. Mishan has been Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics, and Visiting Professor at various universities in Canada and the USA. His many books include *The Costs of Economic Growth* (1967), *Making the World Safe for Pornography* (1973), *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (1975), *Pornography, Psychedelics and Technology* (Allen & Unwin, 1980), *Economic Efficiency and Social Welfare* (Allen & Unwin, 1981), *Introduction to Normative Economics* (Oxford University Press, 1981), and *Introduction to Political Economy* (Hutchinson, 1982). His most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER is "The Road to Repression & Control" (July 1976).

Glen Cavaliero has published three books of poems, most recently *Elegy for St Anne's* (Warren House Press, 1982). His latest book of criticism is *Charles Williams: Poet of Theology* (Macmillan, 1983).

Jean-François Revel writes a column for the Paris journal *Le Point*, where his article first appeared. His most recent book, *How Democracies Perish*, is published by Doubleday.

Arnold Beichman, a visiting scholar at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, is co-author of the biography *Yuri Andropov: New Challenge to the West* and of the forthcoming *Herman Wouk: The Novelist as Social Historian* (Transaction Press).

Owen Dudley Edwards is Reader in Commonwealth and American History, University of Edinburgh. He is co-editor of *America and Ireland, 1776-1976* (Greenwood Press, 1980), *Scotland, Europe and the American Revolution* (Edinburgh University, 1976), and *Edinburgh: A Literary Anthology* (Canongate, 1983). His other books include *Burke and Hare* (Polygon, 1980) and a biographical study of Conan Doyle, *The Quest for Sherlock Holmes* (Penguin, 1984).

Vernon Bogdanor is a Fellow and Senior Tutor, Brasenose College, Oxford. Among his books are *The People and the Party System* and *Multi-Party Politics and the Constitution* (Cambridge University Press, 1981, 1983). He is the co-editor of *Democracy and Elections*, a comparative study of electoral systems (CUP, 1983), and editor of *Coalition Government in Western Europe* (Heinemann, 1983) and *Parties and Democracy in Britain and America* (Praeger, 1984). His study *What is Proportional Representation?* was published in 1984 by Martin Robertson.

Charles Thomas is Professor of Cornish Studies, University of Exeter, and Director of the Institute of Cornish Studies. His publications include *Britain and Ireland in Early Christian Times*, *Early Christian Archaeology of Britain* (1971), and *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (Batsford, 1981), and he is the editor of *Research Objectives in British Archaeology* (CBA, 1983).

Asa Briggs, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford, and Chancellor of the Open University, was created a life peer in 1976. His many published works include two volumes of his *Collected Essays* (Harvester Press, 1984), his four-volume history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom (Oxford University Press), and *A Social History of England* (Weidenfeld, 1983). His most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER was "The Environment of the City" (December 1982).

T. R. Fyvel is a journalist and broadcaster. His books include *George Orwell: A Personal Memoir* (Weidenfeld, 1982).

Joseph Epstein is editor of *The American Scholar* and a regular fiction reviewer for *Commentary*. A new book of his essays, *The Middle of My Tether*, was recently published by Norton.

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LETTERS

Rousseau's Chains

FRANCIS KEENLYSIDE IS, of course, quite right to point out [ENCOUNTER, November] that what Rousseau demanded in the *Social Contract* was not the unchainment of the human race (as I too hastily said) but the proper legitimation of chains by the consent of those who wear them. But since it was just this consent which he declared to be unnecessary in the case of women, the extraordinary difference in his attitude to the claims of the two sexes remains. He allowed women no part at all either in civil or in natural freedom, and this strange move, utterly at odds with the rest of his thought, attracted little attention because so many of his disciples were happy to adopt it too.

There is an interesting witness to its real meaning in the Journals of Mrs Thrale, who repeatedly remarks on the strange likeness between Rousseau's views on women and Dr Johnson's. This surprised her, as well it might, since Johnson was a high Tory, totally hostile to all Rousseau's central democratic ideas. "It used to amaze me", she says, "how very similar the two minds must originally have been made, and how much both were altered from the first Resemblance by Education, Prejudices, Habits and Aims."

But the truth is surely simpler, and less creditable to Rousseau. He simply took license, on this one matter where his emotions were so confused, to relapse without comment or justification into the feudalism which he spent most of his time attacking and had certainly shown to need the sharpest questioning. Unlike Johnson, who had a perfect right to this kind of view since he accepted and defended it on all topics, Rousseau here emerges as a shocking humbug.

I don't want to seem vindictive about this, but the fact that so many supposed champions of liberty have followed his lead right up to the present day gives the matter rather more than just an historical importance.

MARY MIDGLEY

The University
Newcastle upon Tyne

Spelling Reform

I WOULD APPRECIATE the opportunity to correct a misreport in "Life and Letters" (ENCOUNTER, December 1983), taken from the *Yorkshire Post*, which had in turn picked up some misleading remarks from articles in the *New Scientist* that made a straw man out of an article by me on"the information technology of spelling", which had been editorially re-written and re-titled "*Shorter words mean faster reading.*" The magazine in question refused to print any corrections; and now everyone, from *Punch* to distant newspapers short of copy, is liable to completely miss my point—which is that national and international needs for literacy in the English language make it essential that English spelling be as efficient a tool for modern communication as possible.

The three criteria for a more efficient spelling are continuity with present spelling; faster reading by the literate public; and removal of existing barriers to literacy. English spelling fits the language well in some ways; its advantages need to be tested, not assumed. Then those advantages can be maximised, so its most useful principles are applied more consistently than they are now. For example, units of meaning (morphemes) could be represented more consistently; and if there is "clutter" that serves no purpose at all, then it can be identified and left off. Spelling can be matched to common human abilities, not just to the skills of the most able.

AS ENCOUNTER reported the *Yorkshire Post*, I might as well aim to be spelling with numbers; threats are feared to amiable English eccentricity and the pleasures of philology; and it is still assumed that spelling improvement cannot go forward, only backward, to the original notion of pure "spelling as you speak." A government statement about the revolutionary significance of view-data communication was then presented as if it were a grandiose statement about spelling reform.

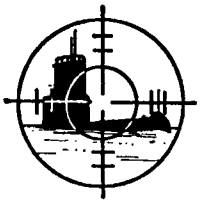
Most other major languages except English and French have updated their writing systems to greater or less degree in the past hundred years; their orthographic museums are their dictionaries, so they lose no history. I am on firm ground in asking that assumptions about English spelling be tested.

Where I may be in the realm of mere argument myself is in my concern that we are complacent that everywhere the content of reading is becoming trivialised—so that the semi-literate can read it. Television can do much that books cannot present well, but it cannot transmit some of the most vital elements of our civilisation. As mass literacy becomes a receding ideal, our culture is open to more unthinking barbarism. I would rather make the medium of our written heritage more accessible.

VALERIE YULE

Old Aberdeen
Scotland

"Whisky on the Rocks"?



NOW THAT mini-submarines have been sighted again in Swedish waters (some ten cases in the period of 1 March-30 September 1984, according to our Commanding General Ljung), the issue is topical again. So may I get around to making a comment in order to qualify the pessimistic sharpness of the attitudes to Swedish policy as expressed in Melvin J. Lasky's column on the Soviet U-Boats in Sweden's waters (ENCOUNTER, November 1983) and the general critical thrust of Henrik Stangerup's remarks (May 1984) on Scandinavian "double-think"?

It is true, up to recently, that two factors operated to put a fuzzy gauze curtain over the dangerous incursions of Soviet naval power into our sovereign waters in the Baltic. One was the reluctance of a neutral unaligned power like Sweden to appear to be making "anti-Soviet propaganda"; and therefore a red spade couldn't be called either by its name or colour. The second was the confounding of our neutrality with the absolute indifference of certain "pacifist" and "anti-war" elements who have found fertile ground for their disaffection in Stockholm ever since the Viet Nam War. We protected thousands of GIs, runaway troops, conscientious objectors, or "deserters" if you will. But that neither meant we were callous to the necessities of defending vigorously our own national interest, nor that we were unaware as to where the threats to our territorial waters, harbours, and naval bases were actually coming from. We looked like the land where, for a long time now, men could flee in order to run away from war. But the recent developments have resulted in a sharp rise of Swedish national feeling and a resurgent militant attitude in favour of our vigilant military defences.

I must admit that in the first period it was all taken light-heartedly—although the jokiness really, in the last analysis, disguised some grim fears. Karlskrona was, in the beginning, good for a giggle. A Soviet "*Whiskey Class*" U-boat went aground—well, it was (hah-hah) whisky on the rocks. There must have been a hundred thousand post-cards sold showing "our Red Fleet U-Boat." Souvenirs proliferated: ashtrays, pencils, T-shirts.

But our public opinion, reluctant as it has been to face it, cannot get around the awesome fact that the Soviet submarine had nuclear war-heads on board! It is, as we say in Swedenglish, "no more funny."

IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THIS let me cite the remarkable swings of national attitudes reported by Dr Karin Busch of the Swedish Institute of Public Opinion:

"A few years ago perhaps 70% approved

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of defence spending. Today it is over 95%. In statistical terms that makes the nation virtually unanimous. I have never known such a change in five years. Why? The discovery of that U-boat, the U-137, grounded off Karlskrona in 1981. . . ."

"The Soviets have scored a dramatic own goal in Scandinavia", is the judgment of Frank Blackerby, Director of the Stockholm Institute for Peace Studies.

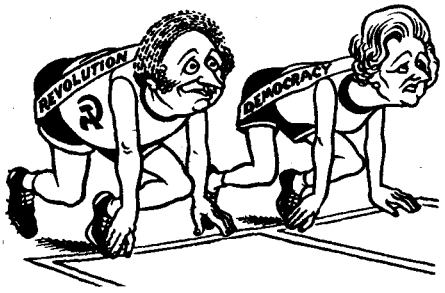
"Once U-137 was found people ceased disbelieving all those years of reported submarine sightings.

From that moment the Soviet hope of making Scandinavia a 'Nuclear Free Zone' vanished. If another submarine is forced to the surface in Karlskrona they'll be seen with a smoking gun in their hand as it were. Swedish nationalism will erupt still further."

That nationalism gives very clear signals down in Karlskrona, a naval town for four centuries with ancient cannon on nearly every corner. Now every Post Office, Government building and school, and dozens of private houses fly the blue-and-gold-flag of Sweden—even peeping from a periscope you couldn't miss them.

A FINAL QUOTATION, and this is the official one which I hope you sceptical Anglo-Americans will believe—even if it is from a nation that last fought a shooting war back in 1809 when

Scargill, "Hero of Labour"



THE CITY *of Sheffield, where Mr Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers, has his headquarters, is "twinned" in amity with the Ukrainian city of Donetsk, in the Soviet Union.*

About ten years ago, a Donetsk coal miner, Alexi Nikitin, was sent to a psychiatric hospital for having complained, with other miners, about the dangerous working conditions down the pit. He served two terms—of four years and three—in these hospitals.

The documentary "The KGB's Torture Hospitals" (made for the "20/20 Vision" series and twice shown on Channel 4) gave a harrowing picture of how systematic torture is used on perfectly sane people in order to break their resistance to the Soviet State. People are tortured by the injection of paraffin, purified sulphur, powerful tranquillisers and other substances that produce extreme physical agony.

Sometimes the "patient" is wrapped and tied in canvas, which is then drenched so that it shrinks, and the person is left shrieking in fearful bodily and mental pain, with blood streaming from the nose, sometimes until death. Other "patients" in the Soviet psychiatric hospitals are forced to watch this torture.

AFTER HIS SPELLS **in psychiatric hospitals, Nikitin was released. He gave an interview to two Western journalists in which he voiced the wish for a free trade union in the USSR, similar to the Polish Solidarity. He was re-arrested and sent again to a psychiatric hospital.**

A Soviet psychiatrist, Dr Anatoly Koryagin, who had examined Nikitin and pronounced him completely sane, was himself arrested and sent to Chistopol prison, where he has been subjected to prolonged and systematic torture.

The miner Nikitin died in prison this March, of a cancer for which he had not been receiving treatment.

DURING THE *preparation of "The KGB's Torture Hospitals" the producer Geoffrey Seed learned that Nikitin had appealed for help to the British trade union movement, and in particular to the NUM.*

The then President, Joe Gormley, made inquiries. In response, a Mr Screbny of the Soviet Coal Miners' Union wrote a letter full of distortions and lies suggesting, among other things, that Nikitin was a drunkard.

"The Observer" (on July 25, 1982) published a story suggesting erroneously that the NUM was taking up the case of Mr Nikitin. In fact, Mr Scargill had written a non-committal letter to Mr Screbny making no demands for a full investigation. In January 1983, Mr Seed rang Mr Scargill, and a conversation took place of which the following are some tape-recorded extracts.

SEED: *I am doing a programme for "20/20 Vision" about Soviet psychiatry . . .*
SCARGILL: **Soviet psychiatry? I'm not an expert on that.**
SEED: *I'm wanting to find out in connection with the case of Mr Nikitin, who has asked the National Union of Mineworkers for some assistance . . .*
SCARGILL: **No he hasn't.**
SEED: *He hasn't?*
SCARGILL: **No.**
SEED: *I have some correspondence between you and Mr Screbny of the Soviet Coalminers Union . . .*
SCARGILL: **How have you got that?**
SEED: *Well, I have it.*
SCARGILL: **Well you shouldn't.**
SEED: *It was also reported in "The Observer" newspaper last year . . .*
SCARGILL: **They shouldn't have it either.**
SEED: *What I'm trying to find out, it was reported in "The Observer" that you were taking up the case of Mr Nikitin. I wondered what progress had been made in the NUM's attempt to help Mr Nikitin.*
SCARGILL: **First of all the position was reported to our executive and I don't propose to add anything to what was said last year.**
SEED: *Can I ask you why?*
SCARGILL: **You can but I'm not going to tell you.**
SEED: *Is that the end of the matter then?*
SCARGILL: **It's not a correspondence that should have been given to a newspaper. These are internal matters that we shall continue to deal with in the normal way . . .**
SEED: *What I want to find out, and I don't want to take a combative attitude on this, as you appear to be doing, is there any help that the NUM can give this man Nikitin and his colleague Klebanov?*
SCARGILL: **I have paid a lot of attention as you probably know to the appalling conditions of mineworkers in . . . Chile and Bolivia . . .**

You don't seem to have concentrated very much on the viciousness of Fascism as you appear to do on the Socialist nations of the world. I don't know why this is. . . . One hears nothing on our television screens about how more people are dying each day in El Salvador than have died in Poland in ten years. . . .
SEED: *Can I say that my questions concern Mr Nikitin . . . The letter to Mr Gormley [from Mr Screbny] about Nikitin contains falsehoods, not to put too fine a point on it . . . Nikitin was trying to help the coal miners in the Donetsk region.*
SCARGILL: **How do you know that?**
SEED: *I've spoken to people who know him.*
SCARGILL: **Have you spoken to him?**
SEED: *How the hell can I? He's shut up in a mental hospital, drugged to the point of blindness.*
SCARGILL: **Oh, is he?**

MR SCARGILL'S UNION **decided not to intervene on behalf of Nikitin. Recently** *Pravda* **acclaimed Mr Scargill as a "hero of labour."**

Richard West

RICHARD WEST, *a widely travelled English writer, has reported from all five continents for a broad spectrum of London publications, from the "New Statesman" to "The Spectator" and the "Daily Telegraph." This piece appeared in the "Daily Mail."*

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we Swedes squabbled with the Czar over Finland. Our expert on the Russians and on International Law, and a man who has served in Moscow, is Ambassador Bo Johnson-Theutenberg. His recent statement (and it was reprinted in the English *Daily Mail*, dispatch by Brian James, 19 March 1984, p.18) will, I trust, convince you and, indeed, throw into a true, realistic light the whole problem of recognising (whether Neutral or NATO) where the aggressive danger lies.

> "Our position of neutrality is misunderstood. It is not a matter of pacifism but a firm commitment not to become involved in foreign wars and never to permit our territory, our water or our airspace to be used by belligerents.
>
> What that implies is that in peacetime we have the absolute duty to demonstrate not only our will, but also our ability to protect ourselves from incursions in time of war.
>
> In the 1950s we had frequent trespass on our airspace. Sweden now has the fourth largest Air Force in Europe. That was our answer. In the past five years we have been made aware of submarines trespassing in the bays and channels of our coastline. We shall find the money similarly to reinforce our undersea defences.
>
> In the meantime we have just revised our instructions to our armed forces. Here, you'll be the first Englishman to have a copy of these instructions . . . but I will summarise what they say: If foreign military personnel cross into Swedish territory force of arms will be resorted to [his voice rose] without prior warning.
>
> Until last year only high-ranking officers could order shooting. Now the captain of a ship, the officer in charge of a platoon of soldiers, yes, even a single sentry who felt himself threatened, may shoot.
>
> If an intruder is shot in Karlskrona it will be much regretted. But we will not draw back. This neutrality of which so much is said, is not based on treaties, for they do not exist. It is based on our resolve to use all military resources to preserve it."

In late October, after the interim recording of 1984 sightings, the Swedish Chief-of-Staff concluded that a certain foreign power held its own interests so high and the territorial integrity of Sweden so low that the U-boat activities could be expected to continue. Consequently, extra security measures would reinforce patrolling in both Karlskrona and Muskö.

The danger, then, is clear. Sweden, after several hundred systematic (or were they all traffic accidents?) incursions into our territorial waters, is now seen by the Swedes as being mapped out as base or corridor for a Soviet raid on NATO forces in Norway and the seas beyond. We will give all possible signals to Moscow about our will to resist—and our confidence to deter.

In other words, our neutrality is not a word for meekness.

SVEN-BERNDT CARLSSON

Stockholm

Poor Macaulay

POOR MACAULAY really had rather more than average bad luck in the September/October issue of ENCOUNTER.

First he had Maria Couto on his back, complaining that his Education Minute "almost created a nation of clerks and semi-skilled workers", and apparently associating him with a government which "feared the effect of modern education and put many obstacles in its way." This really does seem a bit hard, considering that the main purpose of the Education Minute is to argue the case for supporting education in English rather than in the vernaculars; and that Macaulay urged this precisely because to him English was self-evidently the language of modern knowledge and of progress. A grand piece of accidental arrogance, if you like; but the last thing that Macaulay intended was to put obstacles in the way of modern education, or of Indian self-advancement. Is it necessary to remind Ms Couto that it was Macaulay too who said that if the day came when India demanded the right of self-government, it would be "the proudest day in English history"?

But this pales into insignificance beside the efforts of Bernard Sachs, who has Macaulay opposing the 1832 Reform Bill. For the man who came into Parliament in 1830 as the bright young hope of the Whigs and established his political reputation instantly by a series of brilliant speeches urging the crucial necessity of the Reform Bill, this is an injustice so wild as to be almost comic. After this attack of the gremlins, I trust that Macaulay will now be left to lie in peace for a good many ENCOUNTERS to come.

A. L. LE QUESNE

Shrewsbury

MR LE QUESNE IS RIGHT in that Macaulay has had more than average bad luck in the September/October issue of ENCOUNTER. Were Macaulay with us, however, he would not have regarded 15 August 1947, the day of Indian Independence, as "the proudest day in English history." It was not a day when Indians "having become instructed in European knowledge . . . demand [ed] European institutions." Not after two World Wars, Hitler, Auschwitz and Hiroshima.

The interpretation of Macaulay's Minute as a victory over the Orientalists consigned the wisdom and traditions of Indian art, culture, architecture and philosophy into the nether world of superstition and darkness. This too at a time when Bentinck considered sati and the Taj Mahal as abominations, and saved the latter from "abolition" only when an Inspector's test report showed that its marble would not fetch even the demolition price at an auction.

The "unintended" results were that the Minute created a class of "babus", a term that in the time of Warren Hastings and other Orientalists denoted Indians of learning and culture but soon after Macaulay was a term of derision applicable to "native clerks or officials who wrote English" and (to quote the *Oxford English Dictionary*) "sometimes applied disparagingly to a Hindoo . . . with a superficial English education."

In a larger sense the gremlins have saved Macaulay. When predicting the proudest day he did hint that "unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy" and bring to pass "an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay . . . the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws." And for Macaulay's sake we shall have to hope for more encounters with gremlins to realise some of the ideals of the Indo-British connection.

MARIA COUTO

London

Anti-Reductionism

I NOTICE in the current issue a full-page advertisement from the management of ENCOUNTER offering new subscribers a one year subscription rate at 25% less than the normal rate, *plus* a free extra copy if payment, or an American Express charge, is enclosed with the offer.

I submit, Sir, that this is patently unfair to these of us who are long-standing subscribers to ENCOUNTER, as I have been for more than 30 years, having faithfully renewed my subscription each year, with immediate payment. I know of no theory of justice or community that can justify such a practice. In fact, if justice prevailed, those of us who are long-term subscribers should receive a 25% *reduction* after ten years, and several extra copies, and new subscribers ought to pay *extra* for the privilege of subscribing to ENCOUNTER. I submit, further, that if you initiated this mode of practical justice, as against the sordid commercial practices that you presently have been forced to employ, the innate sense of justice would prompt individuals to subscribe in greater numbers.

MATTHEW LOW, Sr.

Cambridge, Mass.

ENCOUNTER acknowledges financial assistance from, among other generous donors, the Arts Council of Great Britain.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BENHAM'S, COLCHESTER

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London

SEX OBJECTS: **Valerie Wise is the chairman of the GLC Women's Committee and is currently trying to ban pictures of pretty girls wearing skimpy lingerie in advertisements on the London Underground.**

She says, bitterly, that the pictures turn girls into *"sex objects."* **I suggest [Lynda Lee-Potter writes] she redresses the balance by replacing them with pictures of herself in baggy knickers and interlock vest. It won't sell anything for the advertisers, but it will successfully turn women into sex rejects. For some curious reason, this is what she seems to be striving for.**

DAILY MAIL

New York City

YANKEE THEOLOGIAN GO HOME: *Following the U.S. liberation of Grenada, the Barbados Christian Council issued a statement declaring that "American and Caribbean Commonwealth forces acted appropriately in landing and taking possession of key installations."*

Then representatives of the Council of Churches of Barbados, the Methodist Church of the South Caribbean and the Council of Churches of Grenada told visiting U.S. congressmen: "We were in favor of the American troops on the island."

So what were the U.S. National Council of Churches, the United Methodists, and other American holy people doing in New York City recently? They were meeting, a pre-rally advertisement said, to protest Ronald Reagan's "stamping out a people's right to determine its own future."

Gentlemen, please call your Grenada office.

WALL STREET JOURNAL

London

QUITE THO: *A scrawl on a wall in Islington proclaims:*

LIBERALS THINK

Beneath it someone has added:

BUT TORIES THWIM

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Sarasota, Florida

LITERACY: **The Federal Appeals Court in Atlanta allowed the state of Florida to withhold diplomas from eight Sarasota seniors who failed a functional literacy test.**

In the 1970s, politicians in many U.S. states rebelled at reports that students were graduating from high schools without knowing how to read. The Florida Legislature ordered the functional literacy test for graduating seniors in 1976. Eleven black students subsequently filed suit, charging that the test which is written on an eighth grade level [age 13-14] discriminated against blacks.

High school students begin taking the test in the 10th grade and are assigned to remedial classes if they fail. Only those who had not yet passed the test took it in their senior year.

Judge George C. Carr of the U.S. District Court in Tampa ruled in 1979 that the multiple choice examination was neither racially nor culturally biased: but ordered the state to wait until 1983 to begin withholding diplomas. By then, he said, every student would have had a chance to receive 12 years of education in an integrated system.

Two-thirds of the seniors who failed the test this year are black. One, Vernon Kearney, is deeply troubled by the weight the test carries. He said: "I've got enough credits to graduate. In academics, I'm passing. That's the only thing holding me back. I don't think one test should spoil 12 years."

NEW YORK TIMES

London

UNSIGHTLY SCENE: *A friend of mine [Philip Howard writes] who is the features editor of a famous old national magazine stumbled over the phrase "***sight unseen***" in a contributor's copy the other day, and tried to replace it with the simpler and shorter word "***unseen***." The contributor objected and the odious phrase stood.*

"Sight unseen", when you stop to think about it, is an odd phrase, a kind of chimera with the head of a tautology, the tail of a contradiction, and the body of a goat. It has come into the language only recently, but it is recorded in all the latest dictionaries. I guess from the exemplary citations that they give, about buying a car sight unseen, that the phrase comes from the flash and prolific jargon of car sales. On the other hand it might just indicate, as Robert Burchfield of the OED *argued devastatingly in the latest edition of* ENCOUNTER, *that lexicographers are the world's greatest plagiarists.*

I think it is just an attempt to sound trendy: "unseen" does the same job more economically. I resolve never to use it myself, and to remove it from the copy of any contributor.

THE TIMES

Paris

ROAST BEEFS: *The normally austere "Le Monde" yesterday unleashed a barrage of jokes aimed at the English in retaliation for a recent anti-French campaign in "The Sun."*

"Do you know how to save an Englishman from drowning? No? So much the better", the journalist Claude Sarraute wrote in launching a competion for *"les rosbifs"* **jokes that carried a trip to London as first prize and three trips to London as second prize.**

M. Sarraute said anti-English jokes were now the vogue in France, adding:

"What is the difference between an accident and a catastrophe? The accident is when a ship full of Englishmen sinks. The catastrophe is when they can swim."

REUTER

Los Angeles

XXXX: *The English language took a severe beating from Olympic broadcasters. Of course, it's easy to sit back and be sniffingly critical of an announcer who's in the heat of an event, and doesn't have an "***x***" key to strike out mistakes. But there were some basic errors being perpetrated—even in copy written in advance. They include: "***so unique***" ("unique" is an absolute and can't be qualified in that way); "***starting slow***" (instead of "slowly"); "the volleyball team is* **devastated** *after its loss" (devastated means "destroyed." What's wrong with "disappointed"?). And a personal favourite: "***highly tireless***."*

NEW YORK TIMES

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While this subscription brings you a good read every two months at astonishingly modest prices, it also opens the line of communication set up by RI between writers and their future readers. And since you share their need to meet face-to-face in the ways only good literature can provide, why not help break through their, *and our*, isolation.

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PALESTINE: *Najran Below Zero* by Yahya Yakhluf. A tour de force, banned in Saudi Arabia, written by the current head of the Palestinian Writers' Union. It demonstrates the dissenting role of the Palestinian intellectual inside the Arab world. During years of civil war, the people of the border region of Najran are buffeted between intimidation and resistance, between Saudi religious repression and an infant Yemini republic—always with an American presence, hovering and anonymous. (ca. 110 pages, retail price £8.00.)

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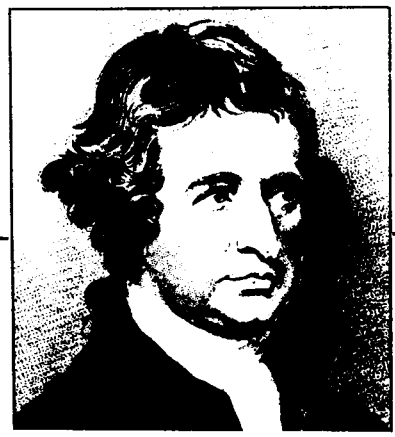

"The Liberty I mean is social *freedom. It is that state of things in which Liberty is secured by the equality of Restraint; A Constitution of things in which the liberty of no one Man, and no body of Men and no Number of men can find Means to trespass on the liberty of any Person or description of Persons in the Society. This kind of Liberty is indeed but another name for Justice, ascertained by wise Laws, and secured by well constructed institutions. I am sure, that Liberty, so incorporated, and in a manner, identified, with Justice, must be infinitely dear to every one, who is capable of conceiving what it is. But whenever a separation is made between Liberty and Justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe."*
Thus Edmund Burke, writing to Charles-Jean-François Depont in November 1789 and giving his first considered judgment on the French Revolution.

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